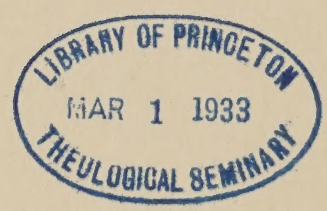
ETHICS OF THE RABBIS

BERYL D. COHON



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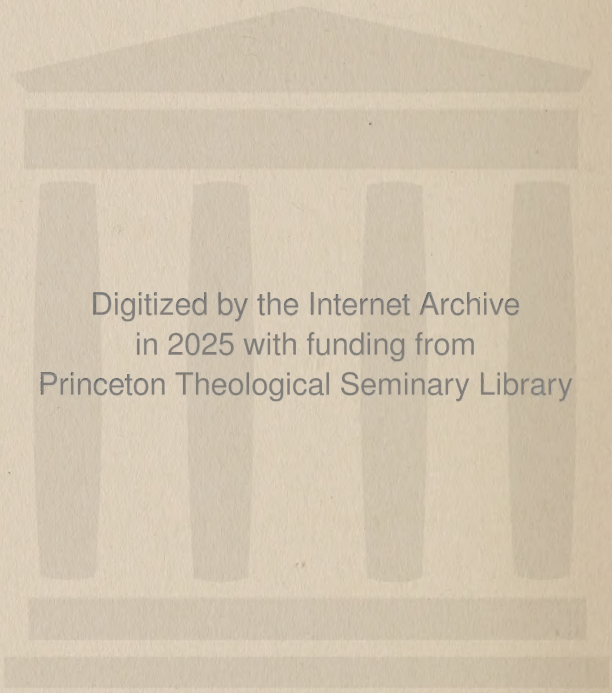
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Ethics of the Rabbis

Based on PIRKE ABOTH

With brief biographies of the more famous sages of the Mishnah

and the Hebrew text of *Aboth*

By

BERYL D. COHON

Author, "Introduction to Judaism"

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1932

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BERYL D. COHON

To
SALLY

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FOREWORD

Of the making of books for Jewish school purposes, there is no end. And yet we have few good text books for our religious schools. And certain periods of Jewish history and thought have been inadequately covered by the material at our disposal. This is especially true of the periods of the prophets and the rabbis. The time of the prophets at least has been rather voluminously treated, however unsatisfactorily. But little has been done to make the vast material of rabbinic Judaism available to our schools. Moreover, what has been offered has not been well presented. So that the curricula of our schools have been denied all this material so necessary to a proper understanding of Jewish thought and so valuable in the development of our Jewish ethical program. We want our boys and girls and our young people to grow into fine manhood and womanhood. We believe that to achieve this end they must think and feel and live Jewishly. Here is a significant contribution to our work. Rabbi Cohon knows his story and tells it well. There is here no suggestion of a complete tale. What he offers can be largely supplemented, of course. But he points the way. His approach, his plan, his content, are all interesting. Better still, the program has been tried out. Temple Israel has eight religious schools and teaches some 1100 children. Rabbi Cohon has charge of all of the schools and of all the supplementary adult education of the Congregation. He knows school work, its needs and its possibilities. This volume was prepared last year to fill a glaring gap in our school work. It succeeded admirably. There is no reason why the service it rendered here cannot be duplicated elsewhere. The experiment deserves the wide-spread encouragement it will no doubt receive.

HARRY LEVI

Temple Israel, Boston, Mass.

PREFACE

The present volume arose from the need the author felt in his educational work. It has been his desire to introduce more authoritative Jewish content into the curriculum of the Jewish religious school as well as presenting more specific Jewish lore before the adult groups it is his privilege to conduct. The literature in this field suitable for adolescents or for Jewish laymen who know no Hebrew and who never had any instruction in rabbinic literature is appallingly meager. There are, of course, many fine scholarly works in English; but they are not for the layman, certainly not for the impatient minds of the young in our Jewish religious schools. *Pirke Aboth,* because of its content and because of its place in Jewish tradition, lends itself well as a means by which to convey an appreciation of the ethical aspirations of the talmudic sages.

In the preparation of this volume the author sought a double objective: 1) To stimulate ethical thinking on problems confronting us in our everyday life. Hence the questions and topics for discussion following each chapter; hence, too, the avoidance of fine definitions and the resort to many examples. 2) To lead this thinking through distinctly Jewish channels. Hence the extensive quotations from rabbinic sources. The author's hope is that the student's mind will gain from this venture that Hebraic edge which is the characteristic of the ethical thinking of Israel.

In the translation of *Pirke Aboth* the author has drawn on the version in Singer's edition of the Authorized Daily Prayer Book and on R. Travers Herford's translation. He allowed himself a few minor variations in an attempt at a simpler statement. He has not hesitated to omit a number of mishnas. Some were omitted because of the insignificance or the obscurity of their contents; others because they merely repeat a thought stated in a previous mishnah. Hence the omissions grow more numerous as the volume advances. He permitted himself this freedom on the ground that the present book is not at all a commentary on *Pirke Aboth* but a source book of rabbinic ethics with *Pirke Aboth* as a basis. The omissions are indicated in every instance and the Hebrew text is given intact. However, a good number of non-ethical statements are retained. This has been done for the reason that Judaism is more than a body of ethical opinion, and these mishnas, while digressions from a technical standpoint, are valuable for a fuller reflection of the nature of Judaism. Footnotes and references are omitted, lest they confuse or discourage the inexperienced student for whom the present volume is prepared.

The author makes no claims to original scholarship. What he has tried to do is to gather together the more elementary and the more popular ethical pronouncements of Jewish tradition and organize them in such a way as to render them

more accessible—and, it is hoped, a bit more attractive—to the inexperienced reader.

To his brother and his teacher, Professor Samuel S. Cohon, the author is indebted for going over the entire manuscript and making a number of suggestions. Dr. Albert Ehrenfried has read portions of the book. His criticism helped make it more practical for school uses. To both these the author expresses his gratitude.

B. D. C.

Temple Israel, Boston, *Autumn,* 1932

A WORD TO THE TEACHER

While the traditional order of *Pirke Aboth* is retained, the teacher should not feel required to follow the present book in the order in which it is arranged. The instructor is teaching a class of human beings, not a book. It might be well to shift the material, depending upon the problem under discussion or upon the mentality or mood of the class. The book is so arranged as to enable the teacher to select the desired material.

Ethics can not be taught by direct preaching or bald moralizing. Such procedure turns ethics into a disagreeable subject and defeats its own purpose. The mind must be persuaded, not coerced. The best way to accomplish this is to present a situation and lead the class to think its way through consistently. Frank discussion of a definite problem with a background of substantial ethical opinion such as the present book seeks to present should prove to be both interesting and effective. The teacher should be a fellow-searcher and a tactful guide, but not a dictator of moral opinion. And we need not belabor the point that a teacher—particularly a religious-school teacher—should be intellectually honest.

There should be no fear of dissenting from the printed opinions, and the students should be made to feel that the teacher is not forcing their conclusions. The rabbis quoted in this book differed

among themselves, and there is no reason whatsoever why we should deny ourselves or deny our children the right to honest difference of opinion.

Some of the projects suggested in the questions or the topics for discussion might be used for the whole school season. That would help unify the work. Perhaps it would be well to follow up several projects, assigning them to different students, or groups of students, in the class. The projects should be drawn from every day life. The daily newspaper, the appeals issued by the various relief agencies, the reports of different institutions seeking to relieve some aspect of our social evils, offer varied and human material.

Above all, the teacher should remember that teaching is not a dictation but a fellowship. It is a search for knowledge, and teacher and pupil are fellow-searchers. Said Rabbi: "I have learned much from my teachers, more from my colleagues than from my masters, and more from my pupils than from all the others."

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this book is to provide material for the study of the ethical teachings of the Jewish sages. To read it intelligently, we must understand what the word "ethics" means. And we ought to know, too, something about the rabbis whose ethics we mean to study. When and where did they live? What did they teach? Where are their teachings explained?

Ethics is the science of right conduct. It means acting justly, doing what is right. You walk down the street and find a purse with money in it. What shall you do? Shall you report it to the police and let them find the owner, because it does not belong to you, or may you say, "finding is keeping?" You purchase something at the store and the storekeeper gives you more change than is due you. May you keep it, or must you inform him of his mistake and return the extra money? You are a lawyer and you know that a certain client of yours has been guilty of criminal misconduct. Shall you turn him over to the officers of justice, or must you hide the truth and act as if he were innocent? What are the ethics of this situation and why?

You sign a contract with some one to ship him certain material, let us say a car-load of coal. The man who entered into this agreement with you depended on receiving the coal at a certain time; he had promised to deliver the coal in small lots to many customers. The time comes for you

to make your shipment and you find that you cannot do it. You do not have the coal, let us say. The miners had declared a strike, or the mine had collapsed and the prices had gone up so high that you could not profitably buy it and fulfill your contract. May you fail your written agreement? May your customer fail his customers because you had failed him? Suppose that you had not signed any agreements; you had simply made a verbal agreement. Would that affect the ethics of the case?

You deposit money in a bank. One day you find that the bank had failed. You go to your banker and say you want your money back. When you deposited it, you did it with the understanding that you might withdraw it any time you pleased. The banker says he is very sorry but your money is gone, and he, the banker, could not help it. He might give you several reasons. Some of the very large depositors had failed the bank; the bank had invested very heavily in some country and then came a revolution and the bank lost all its investments. Your money was part of that investment. The banker could not possibly foresee a revolution or a drought or a general slump in business, and he certainly could not stop it. Is it ethical on his part to answer that way? Is it ethical for you to press your claim for your funds?

These are problems in ethics, for ethics has to do with our conduct towards other people. And

we live constantly in some sort of relationship to many people. We could not possibly live a completely independent existence very long. Can you imagine a boy forming a football team with himself the only player? Or, can you imagine a man doing business without dealing with other people? Ben Zoma, a talmudic sage, wisely said: "How many varieties of labor must Adam have performed before he could eat a piece of bread! He must have sowed, reaped, bound sheaves, threshed, sifted, ground, kneaded, and baked. If he wanted a garment, he must have sheared, washed, fulled, spun and woven. I find all these things done for me when I wake up in the morning." We work with and for each other. Our lives are inter-dependent. We must know, therefore, what is right and what is wrong. Many good and intelligent people differ honestly as to what is and what is not ethical. One employer will say, for example, that it is ethical for him to dismiss from his service some old man because he is too old to work efficiently, though he had worked in the factory many years; another employer will argue that it is not right to accept many years of efficient service and to dismiss him when he is too old to work, and too old to find employment elsewhere. Who is right? What makes one right and the other wrong?

These are questions in ethics. How shall we answer them? What is there that will help us decide upon the right answers? We can not

answer any of these questions and the many, many more that present themselves day after day as we go about our daily business on the basis of our own personal opinions. Our own opinions may be unjust, no matter how sincerely held. We must find some standard by which to judge our answers right or wrong.

As we go on reading the ethical statements of the rabbis, we shall find certain tests as to what is right and what is wrong. At this point in our discussion we can say that there are two large facts to consider before we may pronounce anything right or wrong. The first of these is one's conscience. Every person has a sense of right and wrong within him. That should be respected. This voice within is probably the most important part of us. We must obey our own consciences. But we must be careful. It is perfectly possible for the conscience to be wrong at times. And we must remember that the consciences of different people are not always in agreement. We must therefore remember the second large fact, and that is the well-being of the community, "the largest good for the largest number," as it is often expressed.

Ethics must satisfy the individual conscience and it must satisfy the best interests of the community. At times this is extremely difficult because the individual conscience and the demands of the community do not agree. But ethics must not ignore one nor the other. These two must

be considered before we may decide whether we are ethical or unethical in our opinions or in our conduct. (See Chapter II, Mishnah I for a fuller discussion).

And so when we speak of the "ethics of the rabbis" we mean that conduct which the rabbis taught was right and just between a man and his neighbor, between a man and his community, or between one community and another.

But who were these rabbis? When and where did they teach? Where do we find their teachings recorded?

You have, no doubt, heard that the Jewish people have a very large body of literature known as the Talmud. Perhaps you have seen a Talmud. If you have, you know that it is a set of books as large as an encyclopedia. And if you opened one of the large volumes and looked inside, you know that the Talmud is in the middle of the page, with a great deal of smaller print all around the central column. This smaller print is explanation of the Talmud itself.

It took the Jewish people about eight hundred years to write the Talmud. And the work was done by students, teachers and scribes. We generally speak of them as rabbis. The word "rabbi" means "my teacher". Some of these very famous Jewish scholars and interpreters of the Torah did not have the title "Rabbi"; in some cases because the title "Rabbi" had not yet come into use. It is those Jewish scholars whose teachings are

recorded in the Talmud that we have in mind when we speak of "the rabbis".

When and where did they live? Many of them lived in Palestine, others in Babylon, others in Rome. The Talmud was started about two hundred years before the Common Era, and perhaps even earlier than that. It was finished in the year five hundred of the Common Era. The rabbis whose teachings we read in the Talmud thus lived between two thousand and fifteen hundred years ago. But though they lived so long ago and so far away, many of their teachings are very timely today, as we shall see.

The Talmud is divided into two main parts. The first is the Mishnah; the second is the Gemara. We begin our own book by considering the ethical teachings of the Mishnah. We therefore want to know a little more of this part of the Talmud.

The Mishnah was completed by Judah ha-Nasi, usually referred to simply as "Rabbi'. He was born in the year 135, on the same day when Rabbi Akiba died a martyr's death. We shall learn more about Rabbi and Rabbi Akiba later in our book.

Judah ha-Nasi completed the Mishnah about the year 200. In this Mishnah he gives the teachings of a great many rabbis who lived and taught many years before. The Mishnah is mainly a large collection of Jewish law having to do with the civil and religious life of the people. It is

divided into six "orders" or volumes. Each order is divided into "treatises", or separate books. There are sixty-three treatises in the Mishnah. These treatises are further sub-divided into chapters, and the chapters into paragraphs. The chief purpose of the Mishnah authors, or Tannaim, and the editors was to bring Judaism into closer contact with every-day life—for the Jewish people believe that religion is not only something for the Synagogue or Temple, but a set of ethical teachings to control everything we say or do.

The Mishnah is a book of Jewish laws, completed by Rabbi (*) in the second century. But in this law-book is one tractate of ethical sayings. It is called "Sayings of the Fathers." This tractate has been very popular among our people for many, many hundreds of years. Our people have been in the habit of reading a chapter a week between Pesah and Shebuot. There were only five chapters in this tractate; but since there are six Sabbaths between Pesah and Shebuot, the rabbis added a sixth chapter to the treatise. In some communities the tractate was read in the synagogues throughout the summer.

(*) That is, Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi.

Questions.

1. What do we mean by ethics? Can you give an example from your own experience?

2. Do you remember doing—or wanting to do—something and were not sure if it was right or wrong? What made you think it was right? What made you think it was wrong?

3. What do we mean by the Talmud? What do we mean by the Mishnah?

4. How many hundred years did it take the Jewish people to produce the Talmud?

5. Who was Judah ha-Nasi?

6. What is the subject-matter of the Mishnah? When was it begun? When was it completed? How many treatises does it contain?

7. What do we mean by "The Sayings of the Fathers?"

Topics for Discussion

1. If you lived on an island all by yourself and had no relations whatsoever with human beings, would you have any questions in ethics to answer? Why?

2. What do we mean by "conduct towards other people?" Can we do anything as business or professional people without hurting or benefiting some one else?

3. You are a messenger-boy working in a bank. You are instructed to take a bag of money to a certain factory, which is to be used to pay the workmen for their week's work. You are robbed of the money on the way.

a) Who may be held responsible—you, your bank or the factory owner?

b) May the factory owner tell his employees that he would not pay them their week's wages because the bank's messenger lost the money?

4. You are a banker. You accepted millions of dollars from depositors and lost so much of it in bad investments that your bank failed. It was not your personal fault that the investments turned out badly.

a) To what extent are you responsible and should be held accountable?

b) To what extent may the depositors be held responsible for their obligations if they say that the failure of their bank makes it impossible for them to pay their bills and that they are not to blame for their bank's failure?

5. You are out touring. You notice very beautiful homes in a certain section of the city. Presently you come into a very dingy, filthy neighborhood. You ask yourself: "Is this a just city that permits some people to live in luxury and others in filth and poverty? Is it right for a city to permit some of its citizens to be so rich that they cannot possibly use up a small fraction of their incomes while other people are starving?" What shall your answer be to these questions?

6. Should blind or crippled or old people be allowed to beg on the streets? Why? Why not?

CHAPTER I

I. MISHNAH

Moses received the Torah from Sinai and delivered it to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets delivered it to the men of the great synagogue. These said three things; be deliberate in judging, raise up many disciples, and make a hedge for the Torah.

Commentary

a) Moses Received the Torah From Sinai. When the rabbis use the word "Torah" they mean all of Judaism. In fact, we might translate Torah as Judaism. We should not think of Torah as only the Five Books of Moses. Torah includes all the rest of the Bible, and then the interpretations of the Bible which grew into the Mishnah, and then the Talmud, and then into the very large body of rabbinic literature.

The rabbis speak of a Written Torah and an Oral Torah. By the Written Torah they mean that which is written down as Bible. By the Oral Torah they mean the interpretations given to this written material. And they insisted that without the Oral Torah we could not understand the Written one. Hillel taught this to a heathen very cleverly.* A heathen came to him one day and said that he would

* See chapter on Hillel.

embrace Judaism if Hillel taught him the Written Torah. But he refused to study the Oral Torah. He did not believe in it. Hillel started him with the Hebrew alphabet. The next day he taught him the same alphabet in the reverse order. The heathen was puzzled. "But yesterday you told me something altogether different," he complained. "But didn't you believe me when I said this letter is an *aleph* and that one a *bet?*" asked Hillel. "In the same way" he continued, "we must accept the explanation of those great teachers in Israel who have passed on their explanations by word of mouth, because if we did not have an Oral Torah we could not understand the Written one."

We might translate Torah, also, as the knowledge of God as written down and understood by the Jewish people. Its purpose is to bring justice, love, and truth into the world,—into all the world, for all peoples, and all races. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," declares the Bible. "That," said Rabbi Akiba, "is the chief principle of the Torah." And a much later Rabbi and philsopher, Joseph Albo, expressed the same thought in these words: "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart!" The Torah commands love for the stranger: "Love ye therefore the stranger." The Torah forbids us to oppress and harass him: "He shall dwell with thee, in the midst of thee."

b) And Delivered it to Joshua, etc. Judaism is the religion of the Jewish people as they de-

veloped it throughout the hundreds, we might even say thousands, of years. As our people lived and met their difficulties and thought and hoped, their religion grew and developed. Therefore in Judaism today we have thoughts and ideals poured into it by the past ages. This heritage is called tradition. Jewish tradition, therefore, is the experience of the Jewish people. And it would be a very pitiful thing if we did not learn and benefit from the past. There would be no growth. And we could never advance far. If you, for example, woke up one morning and found that you had forgotten all that you knew the day before, you would be a very unhappy and helpless person. Similarly, if a whole people suddenly forgot its past, it would lose what it took many, many centuries to build up. Tradition, therefore, is not only a good thing, but it is indispensable.

But tradition may be a very bad thing if it is so dogmatic and so hard as to refuse to adapt itself to new needs. A blind following of tradition may reduce all religion to superstition; completely ignoring tradition may mean destroying all that the ages have built up. Thoughtful people seek to remember what is good in the past; that is, preserve certain traditions and carry them forward by adapting them to the new life.

The tradition among the rabbis was that the Torah was revealed by God to Moses on Mt. Sinai who passed it to his disciples and his dis-

ciples to theirs, and so on and on for over three thousand years.

c) Men of the Great Synagogue. That is,—delivered it to Ezra and his disciples. Ezra is believed to have edited the Torah in the year 444 B. C. E.

d) Be Deliberate in Judging. A judge, or anyone else sitting in judgment upon someone else, must be careful and thoughtful; he must not jump to hasty decisions. He should view the case from every possible angle so that justice might not be miscarried. "Thou shalt not wrest judgment," the Bible commands us. "Thou shalt not respect persons; neither shalt thou take a gift; for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. Justice, justice shalt thou follow."

e) Raise up Many Disciples. The Jewish people have not been a missionary people, in the sense of persuading non-Jews to accept Judaism. But non-Jews always were, and are today, welcomed into the Jewish fold if they come with clean hands and pure hearts. When the rabbis command us to "raise up many disciples" they mean for us to teach the Torah to Jews especially. Spread the knowledge of God through learning.

f) Make a Hedge for the Torah. Sometimes this phrase is translated as: "build a fence around the Torah". The thought is, be cautious, do not take reckless risks. The Torah, for example, commands—"Thou shalt not steal." One might say,

"I will not steal but that does not mean that I may not associate with thieves." The rabbis advise us not to take such risks, for they know that human nature is influenced and if we associate with dishonest people we will learn dishonesty from them.

The rabbis have thus surrounded every precept taught by Judaism with many safeguards; and they speak of these safeguards as "hedges around the Torah." And they protected and safeguarded the Torah so well, that throughout the many terrible centuries the Jewish people experienced, the Torah remained safe in their keeping.

II. MISHNAH

Simeon the just was one of the survivors of the great synagogue. He used to say: upon three things the world standeth—upon Torah, upon worship, and upon acts of charity.

Commentary

a) Simeon the Just. We know very little of this teacher in Israel. He lived in the third or perhaps the second century B. C. E. and for a time served as High Priest.

b) The Great Synagogue. This synod is believed to have consisted of one hundred twenty members. Its first leader was Ezra; and its last leader, or one of its last leaders, was Simeon the Just.

c) Torah. Torah is a means of communion

between God and man. What Simeon the Just means to tell us is that one reason why the world endures is that we, somehow, manage to catch some vision of God. "Great is the Torah," say the rabbis, "for if it did not exist, the heaven and the earth would have no permanence." The other forces saving our world from plunging into chaos are worship and deeds of kindness.

d) Worship. Worship supplements Torah. One rabbi expressed this view of worship: "There can be no prayer unless the heart understands, and if the heart knows not what the lips utter, what profit hath a man of his worship?"

e) Acts of Charity. Sometimes this is translated as "showing of kindness." God Himself suffers when mankind suffers, say our teachers. "In all their afflictions He was afflicted," we read in the book of Isaiah. He suffered with Israel in Egypt; He went with them into Exile; He was delivered with them. "The Lord upholdeth all that fall and raiseth up those that are bowed down," sings the Psalmist. And in the book of Exodus, our ancient lawgiver states: "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under its burden, thou shalt not pass it up; thou shalt surely help him." "When thou hast mercy upon thy fellows, thou hast One to have mercy upon thee; but if thou hast no mercy upon thy fellows, thou hast none to have mercy upon thee."

III. MISHNAH

Antigonos of Socho received from Simeon the just. He used to say: be not like servants who serve their master on condition of receiving a gift, but be like servants who serve their master not on condition of receiving a gift. And let the fear of heaven be upon you.

Commentary

a) Antigonos of Socho. We know practically nothing of him. He seems to have lived at a time when the Jewish people came under the influence of Greek civilization.

b) Received From. Notice how tradition passed from mouth to mouth and from generation to generation in Judaism. (See I a.)

c) Be Not Like Servants, etc. Not all men serving God are idealists. The Bible itself gives us instances where men serve God out of crude and unworthy motives. Some serve him out of fear, some for the sake of receiving very special and very material benefits. The highest motive in the service of God is the love of God, loyalty to one's highest ideals, whatever the cost. In the book of Habakkuk we have this pure motive expressed in these beautiful words:

"For though the fig-tree shall not blossom,
Neither shall fruit be in the vines;
The labor of the olives shall fail,
And the fields shall yield no food;
The flock shall be cut off from the fold,
And there shall be no herd in the stalls;
Yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will exult in the God of my salvation."

"The reward for virtue is virtue itself", we shall read from the rabbis a little later in our book. "Blessed is the man who delighteth greatly in His commandments," says the Psalmist. R. Eliezer explained it thus: Blessed is he who delighteth in His *commandments* and not in the reward attached to them.

But though our motives be not a definite reward, *a certain kind* of reward does come to us as a result of obeying our highest ideals. We grow into stronger, finer, more just, more sympathetic human beings. And that is a very great reward.

d) Let the Fear of Heaven, etc. "Fear of Heaven" is another expression for fear of God.

IV. MISHNAH

Jose ben Joezer of Zeredah, and Jose ben Johanan of Jerusalem received from them. Jose of Zeredah said: let thy house be a place of meeting for the wise, and dust thyself with the dust of their feet, and drink their words with thirst.

Commentary

a) Jose ben Joezer, and Jose ben Johanan. These teachers lived at the time of the Maccabean wars, that is, in the second century B. C. E.

b) Received From Them. A further example how Jewish tradition passed from teacher to disciple.

c) Let Thy House be a Meeting Place For the Wise. It is an honor to have wise men come to your home, scholarly men who understand and appreciate the Torah. The highest honors in Jewish tradition have been granted to the scholars and not to the merely rich or merely clever people. "He who does not rise from his seat in the presence of a scholar shows bad manners." "Whoever offends the honor of a Jewish sage, wounds the honor of God; but he who honors a sage, extends hospitality to the honor of God," say our sages. The Torah is sacred. Therefore the teachers of the Torah are to be held in high esteem.

d) And Dust Thyself in the Dust of Their Feet. This is a figurative way of saying: be humble before your teachers.

V. Omitted

VI. MISHNAH

Joshua ben Perahyah and Nittai the Arbelite received from them. Joshua ben Perahyah said: make thee a master, get thee a companion, and judge every man by the scale of merit.

Commentary

a) Joshua ben Perahyah and Nittai lived about the year 100 B. C. E.

b) The Arbelite. That is, he was a native of Arbela, a city in northern Palestine.

c) Make Thee a Master. Acquire a teacher. **d) Get Thee a Companion.** How long could you be happy without friends? "Either a companion or death," say the rabbis. And they tell a story of a famous character by the name of Honi to illustrate this point. "One day, while walking on the road," we read in the Talmud, "Honi noticed a man planting a carob-tree. Said Honi to the man, 'You know that it takes seventy years before a carob-tree bears fruit; are you so sure that you will live seventy years and eat therefrom?' 'I found this world provided with carob-trees,' the man replied. 'As my ancestors planted them for me, so I plant them for those who will come after me.' Thereupon Honi sat down to eat and was overcome by sleep. As he slept, a grotto was formed around him, so that he was screened off. Thus he slept for seventy years. When he awoke he noticed a man gathering carobs from the carob-tree and eating them. 'Do you know who planted this carob-tree?' Honi asked. 'My grandfather,' the man replied. 'I must have slept seventy years!' Honi exclaimed. He went to his house and inquired if his son was alive. He was told that his son had died but that his grandson was alive. He introduced himself. 'I am Honi,' he said, but no one would believe him. He went to the synagogue and heard the scholars studying the Torah. He heard one say, 'Our studies are as clear to us today as they

used to be in the time of Honi, for when he came to the synagogue he used to explain away all the difficulties.' He then said to them, 'I am Honi.' But they would not believe him nor show him the respect due him. It grieved him and he prayed that he might die. Hence the popular proverb, *either a companion or death.*"

VII. MISHNAH

Nittai the Arbelite said: keep far from an evil neighbor, consort not with the wicked, and be not doubtful of retribution.

Commentary

a) Nittai the Arbelite. (See VI a, b.)

b) Keep Far From an Evil Neighbor, etc. Evil is contagious. Living among evil people, consorting with the wicked may turn us too into evil and wicked people. Nittai is advising caution, and his advice is in line with the principle followed by the rabbis when they urged "a hedge around the Torah." (See I. f.)

c) Be not Doubtful of Retribution. The rabbis taught that God deals with man in a judicial manner. They called their doctrine, "measure for measure." "With what measure a man measures, it shall be measured unto him.' The good prosper and the evil suffer, if not in this world then in the world to come. The rabbis thus believed in another-world reward and punishment. This helped them account for the fact

that many wicked people do prosper in this world while many fine and upright people suffer. "It is not in our power to explain the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the pious," they say.

This belief in another-world retribution has been abandoned by many Jews. We need not subscribe to it if it contradicts our best thinking and our everyday experience. But the fact that God is the righteous Judge dealing justly with all men, need not be abandoned. It is our idea of retribution that must be changed. We should not think of rewards or punishments in a material sense. It is enough if we understand Nittai's statement to mean that as we sow so do we reap. Life may be likened to a mirror; it reflects whatever faces we make. Or, life may be compared to an echo; as we call, so does the world reply.

VIII. AND IX. MISHNAH

Judah ben Tabai and Simeon ben Shatah received from them. Judah ben Tabai said: make not thyself as they who prepare the judges; and when the suitors are before thee, let them be as wrongdoers in thy sight; and when they have departed from before thee, let them be in thy sight as innocent men, seeing they have accepted the sentence upon themselves.

Simeon ben Shatah said: examine thoroughly the witnesses, and be careful in thy words: perchance through them they may learn to lie.

Commentary

a) Judah ben Tabai and Simeon ben Shatah. These teachers taught about the year 100.

b) These two mishnas are instructions for those who served in the Jewish courts. The Torah was not only a religious guide but, also, a code of civil laws, and the rabbis were called upon to settle civil cases—such as property rights, etc.

c) As They Who Prepare the Judges. That is, be not like those who see the judge before the trial, bribe him, or prejudice him in their favor.

X. MISHNAH

Shemaiah and Abtalion received from them. Shemaiah said, love work and hate mastery and seek no intimacy with the ruling power.

Commentary

a) Shemaiah and Abtalion lived at the time of Herod the Great.

b) Love Work. Honest work is worship. Judaism preaches that every man ought to be at work at some honest job. "Go unto the ant, thou sluggard; learn of its ways and be wise," we read in the Book of Proverbs. The ant works and builds its community and contributes its honest share to the well-being of the colony. "Choose life," says the Bible. The rabbis explain this phrase thus: "Life" means "work",—

"choose work, yea, even hand work." "The honest laborer", we read in the Talmud, "who eats the fruit of the labor of his hands, is greater than the merely pious." Some of the rabbis of the Talmud were laborers. One was a shoemaker, one a charcoal burner, one a log-splitter, one a farmer, etc. Teaching the Torah was a matter of love to them and they refused to derive any personal profit from it.

c) Hate Mastery. Be not a superior person in that you give orders and demand obedience. Be not domineering.

d) And Seek no Intimacy With the Ruling Power. Shemaiah and Abtalion lived at a time when the Jewish people were under the tyranny of Rome. The government was cruel and treacherous. Thus they advise people not to be too intimate with the government.

XI. Omitted

XII. MISHNAH

Hillel and Shammai received from them. Hillel said: be of the disciples of Aaron: one that loves peace, that loves mankind and brings them nigh to Torah.

Commentary

a) Hillel and Shammai were old men at the beginning of the Common Era. Read the chapter on Hillel in Part II of this book.

b) Disciples of Aaron. Aaron was a man of peace. He was a priest. The bendiction the priests invoked upon the people was one asking God for peace: "May He lift the Light of His countenance upon you and grant you peace." Peace is an ideal that Judaism has been preaching for thousands of years. The prophet Isaiah dreamed of a time when nations would break their swords and turn their instruments of destruction into tools of construction. A time would come, he said, when God would judge the violent, war-making nations: "And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more." The Jewish people have been praying for peace for many, many centuries: "Grant us peace, Thy most precious gift, O Thou, Eternal Source of peace; and enable Israel to be a messenger of peace to the peoples of the earth." The rabbis of the Talmud say, "When God desired to bless Israel He could find no more suitable instrument than peace. As it is said: 'When God granted strength to His people, He blessed His people with peace.' "Peaceful reconciliation," the rabbis say further, "is better than stern justice."

c) That Loves Mankind. By mankind, of course, we mean everybody, of whatever race, of whatever religion.

d) And brings Them Nigh to Torah. (See Ie.)

XIII. MISHNAH

He (Hillel) used to say: whoso makes great his name loses his name, and who does not increase his knowledge decreases it; he who does not study deserves to die, and he who makes a worldly use of the crown of the Torah shall waste away.

Commentary

a) This Mishnah teaches the lesson of humility. People who make a great name for themselves by boasting a great deal are really making a bad name for themselves. "Let another praise thee, and not thy own mouth," the wise man of the book of Proverbs advises us. A modern teacher in Israel teaches the lesson of humility in these words: "To humility two things are essential, namely, to think of one's self modestly and to conduct one's self modestly. Humble-mindedness must first be present, after that modest behavior is able to follow."

Even in externals we should strive to be modest. "It is becoming in a man", says a rabbi, "to be moderate in all things, even in his style of dress. He will avoid the excessive finery which sets other people gaping at him."

b) Who Does Not Increase, etc. He who does not keep up with his studies forgets what he has already learned. We must either grow in our knowledge or fall back. Neglect the

Torah for one day, say the rabbis, and it will slip away from you for two days.

c) He Who Does Not Study Deserves to Die. Lack of knowledge, lack of Torah, lack of understanding is spiritual suicide. "Grant me understanding that I may live," prays the Psalmist.

XIV. MISHNAH

He (Hillel) used to say: if I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am for myself only, what am I? And if not now, when?

Commentary

Every man must provide for his own needs and take care of his own affairs first. No one should submit his prosperity to chance or to the mercy of other people. Every man must be self-reliant and self-supporting. "Live on the coarsest food rather than be dependent upon others," say the rabbis. But that is only one-half of his duty. Every man must be socially-minded. He must not fail his fellows who need help and encouragement. "If I am for myself only," asks Hillel, "then what am I?" He is certainly not a decent human being. And if he does not do his duty now, then when *will* he do it? He might say, "I shall do it tomorrow." And when tomorrow comes, he is quite likely to postpone it for the next day, and so continue till he neglects his duty altogether.

XV. MISHNAH

Shammai said: fix a period for thy study of the Torah. Say little and do much: and receive every man with a cheerful expression of face.

Commentary

a) Fix a Period, etc. Do not let your study of the Torah be a haphazard affair. Set aside a definite time for study and follow your schedule.
b) Say Little and Do Much. It is easy to make promises and fine speeches. Torah is precious and should be studied by every Jew; but carrying it out in life, doing what it commands, is even more important. The rabbis preach this point: Why does the Bible read—"Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God to do them?" One might suppose that if a man keeps the words of the Torah, he need not do them. Therefore the Torah says, "to do them." "If a man learns the words of the Torah, he has fulfilled one commandment; if he learns and keeps them, he has fulfilled two; if he learns and keeps and observes them, there is no one greater than he."

XVI. and XVII. Omitted

XVIII. MISHNAH

Rabbi Simeon, the Son of Gamaliel, said: by three things is the world preserved: by truth,

by justice, and by peace, as it is said: "Judge ye the truth and the judgment of peace in your gates."

Commentary

a) Rabbi Simeon, the Son of Gamaliel (or ben Gamaliel) lived in the first century of the Common Era.

b) By Three Things is the World Preserved. Our social life holds together and functions by the strength of three ideals: truth, justice, and peace.

c) Truth, say the rabbis, is the seal of God. Truth, they say again, is the footprint of God. Wherever you see truth there you see a sign of God. "The Lord your God is truth," they say. The Hebrew word for truth is *emeth,* which, in Hebrew, consists of three letters. The first of these letters is the first letter in the Hebrew alphabet; the last of the three letters is the last in the Hebrew alphabet; and the middle letter is exactly in the middle of the Hebrew alphabet. Just as the word *emeth* holds within itself the beginning, the end and the middle of the Hebrew alphabet, so, say the rabbis, does the ideal of truth hold with itself the beginning, the end, and the middle of Judaism.

d) Justice. Judaism insists on elementary justice between man and man, between a man and his community. Its battle-cry has been, "Justice, justice shalt thou pursue." God Him-

self is a righteous judge, who applies the rule of justice to every person.

The Hebrew word for justice used by Rabbi Simeon also means law. Sentimentalizing about justice is not enough. We must have definite rules making justice the condition of life. And so Judaism insists on both—justice and law—justice working through law.

e) Peace. "Seek peace and pursue it," says the Bible. The rabbis add to this, "Pursue it wherever you happen to be." The time and the place to live up to the ideal of peace is just exactly where you are right now. One famous rabbi preached the ideal of peace in these words: "To be at peace with all the world, with Jew and Gentile, must be your foremost aim in this terrestrial life. Contend with no man. In the first instance, your home must be the abode of quietness and happiness; no harsh word must be spoken there; but over all must reign love, amity, modesty, and a spirit of gentleness and reverence. This spirit must not end within the home, however. In your dealings with the world you must allow neither money nor ambition to disturb you. For the main thing is peace, peace with all the world." (See, also, Mishnah XII b)

Questions and Topics for Discussion
Based on Chapter I

Questions:

1. What is meant by
   a) Torah?
   b) the Written Torah?
   c) the Oral Torah?
2. Why do we need the oral Torah? How did Hillel explain it to the heathen?
3. Which quotation from the rabbis on the subject of Torah do you like best? Why?
4. What does the word "tradition" mean?
5. What is the value of tradition? Explain.
6. Could Judaism live without tradition?
7. Is tradition alone sufficient? Explain.
8. What is meant by "the Men of the Great Synagogue"?
9. What does the Mishnah mean by "hedge around the Torah"?
10. What has been the Jewish attitude toward missionary work?
11. What is the teaching of the Mishnah on the subjects of:—
    a) worship?
    b) acts of charity?
    c) work?
    d) lordship?
    e) our attitude towards the government?
    f) habits of study?
12. What does the Mishnah mean by "the reward of virtue is virtue itself"?

13. How many examples can you give showing the respect the Jewish people showed the scholar?

14. What is the point to the story of Honi?

Topics for Discussion:

1. Do you think that Hillel was accurate in his answer to the heathen who wanted to learn all about Judaism while standing on one foot? Should Hillel not have included in his answer the following:

a) tradition?
b) worship?
c) ceremonies?
d) mizvoth?
e) beliefs?
f) kashruth?
g) observance of the holy days?

Did Hillel, by omitting them, mean to say that they are not important? Prove your point with further quotations from Hillel.

2. Our country declares war. You are of army age and are called to the colors. You say, "My religion teaches peace. It is against war. The Bible and the Talmud condemn it; the rabbis preach against it. I can not, therefore, go to war. The government has no right to force me to do something which is against my conscience and my religion." Would you be right? Why? Would you be wrong? Why?

CHAPTER II.

I. MISHNAH

Rabbi said: which is the right course that a man should choose for himself? that which he feels to be honorable to himself, and which also brings him honor from mankind. Be heedful of a light precept as of a grave one, for thou knowest not the grant of reward for each precept. Reckon the loss incurred by the fulfillment of a precept against the reward secured by its observance, and the gain gotten by a transgression against the loss it involves. Reflect upon three things and thou wilt not come within the power of sin: know what is above thee—a seeing eye, a hearing ear, and all thy deeds written in a book.

Commentary

a) Rabbi. That is Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi (Judah the Prince).*

b) Which is the Right Course, etc. Which is the good life? The rabbis, following the Bible, speak of life as a way, or a path. Many ways are possible. Which road shall a man take to bring him to the good life? That is, what must a man do, what must he not do, or in other words, how shall he live in order to be a good man?

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* Read the chapter on Judah ha-Nasi in Part II. of this book.

c) That Which he Feels to be Honorable to Himself, and Which Also Brings Him Honor From Mankind. The good life must, first of all, satisfy one's own conscience. Conscience is the voice of God speaking in the heart of every good man and woman. But a man must do something more than obey his own conscience. There are other people in the world besides himself, and they too have consciences. And people do not agree completely as to what is right and good. Hence every man must bear in mind the welfare of his community and live accordingly. There must be established a harmonious relationship between the individual conscience and the conscience of the community. It is a difficult thing to do. Sometimes the individual conscience is wrong, however sincere it may be; sometimes the whole community may be wrong, and the ancient teachers of Judaism tell us not to follow a mob to do evil. But difficult though it is, a harmonious relationship must be established between our consciences and the conscience of the community, if we are to follow the advice of Rabbi when he tells us to choose the right way of life.

d) Be Heedful of a Light Precept. This is addressed to those who seek to live by the Torah. One might say to himself, "This commandment is not very important; therefore I shall not bother keeping it." Rabbi warns us against such reasoning, because we do not

know what the consequences may be. A germ is a very tiny organism; yet it can cause severe pain and even death. Life is made up of details, and it is details we must watch.

e) Reckon the Loss Incurred by the Fulfillment of a Precept Against the Reward Secured by its Observance. Fulfilling a precept means doing a good deed commanded by our religion. You walk down the street and a hungry man asks you for a meal. You have some money in your pocket which you might give him, but you had intended to buy yourself something. Shall you buy this man a meal and give up the idea of buying yourself whatever it was you wanted to buy, or shall you ignore this man? There would be a loss and a gain. The loss is that you denied yourself something you wanted; the gain is the knowledge and the feeling that you have done something noble and beautiful.

f) Will Not Come Within the Power of Sin. Sin is wrong doing, wrong by oneself, or wrong by somebody else.

II. MISHNAH

Rabban Gamaliel, son of Rabbi Judah the Prince, said: an excellent thing is the study of the Torah combined with some worldly occupation, for the labor demanded by both makes sin to be forgotten. All study of the Torah without work must in the end be futile and become the cause of sin. Let all who are employed with

the congregation act with them for heaven's sake, for then the merit of their fathers sustains them, and their righteousness endures for ever. And as for you (God will then say) I account you worthy of great reward, as if you had wrought it all yourselves.

Commentary

a) Torah Combined With Some Worldly Occupation. Torah holds ideals and theories; these must function in a practical life. The rabbis preached the wisdom of every man teaching his son a practical trade. "He who does not teach his son a trade teaches him to be a thief," they say. "A man who does not combine his religious views with some practical task working at some honorable job, profanes the name of God, dishonors the Torah and quenches the light of religion," says Maimonides. Hence the talmudic rabbis followed humble occupations. Some were carpenters, some cobblers, etc. (See Ch. I. Mishnah X b)

b) Heaven's Sake. For the love of God.

c) Merit of Their Fathers. Children benefit from the good deeds of their parents; communities prosper because of the good work of past generations.

III. Omitted

IV. MISHNAH

He used to say, do God's will as if it were thy will, that He may do thy will as if it were His will. Nullify thy will before His will, that He may nullify the will of others before thy will.

Commentary

a) He. Rabban Gamaliel.

b) Do God's Will, etc. There must be complete harmony between the will of God and the will of man, and it is man who must surrender his own will and subject himself to God's. "Strive to do the Will of God, with a perfect heart and a willing soul; efface thy will, even if the will of God be a burden laid upon thee," says an ancient rabbi. And another sage, Rabbi Eleazer, offers this beautiful prayer: "Do Thy will in the heavens above, and grant peace of mind to them that fear Thee, below; and do what is good in Thy sight. Blessed art Thou, O God, who hearest prayer."

V. MISHNAH

Hillel said: separate not thyself from the congregation; trust not in thyself until the day of thy death; judge not thy neighbor until thou art come into his place; and say not anything which cannot be understood at once, in the hope that it will be understood in the end; neither say, when I have leisure I will study, perchance thou wilt have no leisure.

Commentary

a) Separate Not Thyself From the Congregation. By "the congregation" Hillel means the Jewish people, all the Jewish people being viewed as a religious community. It is every Jew's duty to stand by his community, to help solve its problems, share in its joys and sorrows. "Israel will only then be redeemed," say the rabbis, "when it forms one single band; when all are united, they will receive the presence of God." When Moses was on the mountain top, absent from his people for many days, and the people sinned by turning to idol-worship, God commanded him to hurry back to his people because his people needed him, say the rabbis. And they say further, "If an individual separates himself from the community when the community is in trouble, the two ministering angels that accompany every man, place their hands upon his head and say, 'such and such and such a man who separated himself from the community shall not live to see the comfort of the community'." "When the community is in distress one should not say, I will go home, eat and drink and peace will be upon my soul. But a man must share in the trouble of the community even as Moses did."

b) Trust Not in Thyself Until the Day of Thy Death. Be not overconfident at any time.

c) Judge not Thy Neighbor Till Thou Art Come into His Place. We must understand be-

fore we may pass judgment, and we cannot understand anyone until we have completely placed ourselves in his position. "He who judges his neighbor favorably," say the rabbis, "will be judged favorably by God."

d) And Say Not Anything Which Can Not be Understood at Once. This advice is to teachers. Be specific and clear.

e) When I Have Leisure I Will Study. Do not postpone. We have heard Hillel urge this thought once before: "If not now, when?"

VI. MISHNAH

He (Hillel) used to say: a vulgar man can not be a sinfearing man, nor can an ignorant person be pious, nor can a shy person learn, nor a passionate man teach, nor can one who is overengaged in business be wise. In the place where there are no men, strive thou to be a man.

a) A Vulgar Man Can Not be a Sinfearing Man. Judaism is a religion of Torah, and Torah means a culture gained through study, knowledge, and understanding. The Rabbis speak of God Himself as teaching Israel Torah. Ignorance and Judaism can not live together. "Beware of a fool who is devout, and of a wise man who is a sinner," Solomon ibn Gabirol advises us.

b) In the Place Where There are no Men, Strive Thou to be a Man. When there is some good work to be done and no one offers to do

it, when some cause or some ideal is to be championed or some sacrifice is to be made and no one responds, when courage and truth and honor are needed and no one displays it, you do it, you take the lead.

VII. MISHNAH

Moreover, He Saw a Skull Floating Upon the water. He said to it: because thou didst drown others, they have drowned thee, and at last they that drowned thee will themselves be drowned.

Commentary

We receive from life that which we bring to it. As we call, so does life re-echo; or, like the mirror, it reflects whatever face we make. "With what measure a man measures, it is measured unto him," says the Talmud.

VIII. Omitted

IX. MISHNAH

Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai received the tradition from Hillel and Shammai. He used to say, if thou hast learned much Torah, ascribe not any merit to thyself, for thereunto wast thou created.

Commentary

a) Johanan ben Zakkai lived at the time of the destruction of the Temple by the Rom-

ans and founded the academy at Jabneh. Read the chapter on Johanan ben Zakkai in Part II. of this Book.

b) If Thou Hast Learned Much Torah, etc. No special flattery is due a person because he has learned Torah, for it is only proper that every Jew should be versed in Torah. A knowledge of the Torah is a matter of fact in Jewish life.

X–XII. MISHNAH

Five disciples had Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai and there are they: Rabbi Eliezer ben Horkenos, Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah, Rabbi Jose the Priest, Rabbi Simeon ben Nathaniel, and Rabbi Eleazar ben Arach.

He used to recount their praises: Eliezer ben Horkenos is a cemented cistern which loses not a drop. Joshua ben Hananiah, happy is she that bore him. Jose the Priest is a pious man. Simeon ben Nathaniel is a fearer of sin. Eleazar ben Arach is like a spring flowing with ever-sustained vigor.

He used to say: if all the sages of Israel were in one scale of the balance, and Eliezer ben Horkenos also with them, and Eleazar ben Arach in the other scale, he would outweigh them all.

a) Eliezer ben Horkenos taught at Lydda, in South Judea.

b) Joshua ben Hananiah left Jerusalem short-

ly before its fall in the year 70, and founded a school in Bekiin, a small town in Palestine between Lydda and Jabneh. Read the chapter on Joshua ben Hananiah in Part II. of this book.

c) **Rabbi Jose The Priest, Rabbi Simeon ben Nathaniel, and Eleazer ben Arach** were not as influential in the development of Judaism as were Eliezer ben Horkenos and Joshua ben Hananiah.

XIII. MISHNAH

He said to them, go forth and see which is the good way to which a man should cleave. Rabbi Eliezer said: a good eye. Rabbi Joshua said: a good friend. Rabbi Jose said: a good neighbor. Rabbi Simeon said: one who can read the future. Rabbi Eleazar said: a good heart. Thereupon he said to them, I approve the words of Eleazar ben Arach rather than your words, for in his words yours are included.

Commentary

The map of life has many roads leading to different goals. Which is the best road for a man to take? That is, where lies a man's well-being, his largest good? Johanan ben Zakkai accepted the answer of his favorite disciple and chose "the good heart"—that is, the kind, generous, sympathetic, loving heart. Which do you accept?

XIV. MISHNAH

He said to them, go forth and see which is the evil way a man should shun. Rabbi Eliezer said: an evil eye. Rabbi Joshua said: a bad friend. Rabbi Jose said: A bad neighbor. Rabbi Simeon said: One that borrows and does not repay. (Psalm XXXVII, 21). It is the same whether one borrows from man or God. As it is said, the wicked borroweth and payeth not again, but the righteous dealeth graciously and giveth. Rabbi Eleazar said: A bad heart. Thereupon he said to him: I approve the words of Eleazar ben Arach rather than your words, for in his words yours are included.

Commentary

a) This Mishnah is the reverse of the previous one.

b) One That Borrows and Does Not Repay—borrows not only things from his friends, but one who draws on the future, making pledges or presuming on the future without considering the effects.

XV. MISHNAH

They said three things, Rabbi Eliezer said: let thy friend's honor be as dear to thee as thine own; and be not easily moved to anger; and repent one day before thy death. And he further said, warm thyself by the fire of the wise; but

beware of their glowing coals, lest thou be burnt, for their bite is the bite of the fox, and their sting is the scorpion's sting, and their hiss is the serpent's hiss; and all their words are like coals of fire.

Commentary

a) Let Thy Friend's Honor, etc. This is another way of saying, Love thy neighbor as thyself. The Rabbis represented God as saying to us. "My sons, my sons! Do I require aught of you for Myself? All I ask of you is that you love one another."

b) Be not Easily Moved to Anger. "Anger dwelleth in the bosom of fools." "An angry man loses his learning," say the rabbis.

c) Repent one Day Before Thy Death. No man knows when his day of death will come; every man must therefore be ever ready to meet his Maker with a clean conscience.

d) And he Further Said. The rest of the Mishnah is a harsh criticism of the sages. Rabbi Eliezer had been excommunicated by the leading rabbis of that time, and his criticism springs from his personal feelings. His point is that even the highest gift, such as Torah, can be abused and turned into a source of pain and sorrow to people.

XVI. MISHNAH

Rabbi Joshua said: The evil eye, the evil inclina-

tion, and hatred of his fellow creatures put a man out of the world.

Commentary

The Evil Eye, etc. What Rabbi Joshua teaches is that selfishness, expressing itself through a malicious, envious eye, destroys life. Similarly, evil desires, human vices and hatred shorten life. Hatred kills him that hates. See Rabbi Eleazer's answer to Johanan ben Zakkai in Mishnah XIV above.

XVII. MISHNAH

Rabbi Jose said: let the property of thy associate be dear to thee as thy own. Qualify thyself for the study of the Torah, since knowledge of it is not an inheritance, and let all thy deeds be done for the name of heaven.

Commentary

a) Rabbi Jose. We know very little of this teacher.

b) Let the Property of Thy Associate, etc. Rabbi Jose is teaching respect for what belongs to some one else. "Thou shalt not steal," the Ten Commandments teach us.

c) Qualify Thyself in the Study of the Torah, etc. We can not inherit our knowledge of the Torah any more than we can inherit knowledge in any other field. We must acquire it by

persistent application and steady effort. No one may become a skillful surgeon, for example, for the simple reason that his father was one. This is even more so in the case of Torah or Judaism. We may learn the facts of Jewish history, we may come to know the customs and institutions in Jewish life, but we will not make Judaism our very own until we have qualified ourselves so as to allow this information to color our thinking and affect our feeling. The Torah, we must remember, is not only a body of literature, but a life. "It is thy life and the length of thy days," Moses commanded us.

d) Let all Thy Deeds be Done in the Name of Heaven. That is, not for the sake of material reward but for the glory of God.

XVIII.–XIX. Omitted

XX. MISHNAH

Rabbi Tarfon said: the day is short and the work is great, the laborers are sluggish, the wages are high, and the master of the household is urgent.

XXI. MISHNAH

He used also to say: it is not thy duty to complete the work, but neither art thou free to desist from it. If thou hast studied much Torah, much reward will be given thee, for thy em-

ployer is faithful to pay thee the reward of thy labor. And know that the grant of reward unto the righteous will be in the time to come.

Commentary

a) Rabbi Tarfon. He is believed to have met his death in the persecutions of the year 117 C. E.

b) The Day is Short, etc. Life presents us with many tasks and much responsibility. There is a great deal that we must do and a great deal that we must learn, but our life is short, too short for the work we are called upon to do.

c) The Laborers are Sluggish. We are given to laziness and thus waste the little time that is allotted us.

d) The Master of the Household. i. e. God.

e) It is Not Thy Duty to Complete the Work. The fact that the task is great and the further fact that we are incapable of completing it does not mean that we ought not do our honest share of it. We do our best, and that is all that God requires of us.

f) The Reward of Thy Labor. See Chapter I, Mishnah IIIc.

g) The Grant of the Reward to the Righteous Will be in the Time to Come. The rabbis of the Talmud believed in a life after death where the just would be rewarded and the unjust punished.

Questions and Topics for Discussion

Based on Chapter II.

1. Who was Rabbi? What was his chief contribution to the literature of Judaism?

2. What does the Mishnah think of "a light precept?" Why?

3. What does the Mishnah say should be the relationship between

a) learning and work?

b) Judaism and ignorance?

c) creed and deed?

4. Who was Johanan ben Zakkai? What was his chief contribution to Judaism?

5 Who was Joshua ben Hananiah? How many stories told of him can you recount?

Topics for Discussion:

1. In his search for the good life, Judah ha-Nasi wants to satisfy the individual who is seeking the good life and the community in which the individual lives. Why satisfy both? Can you give an example showing how personal happiness is sought in terms of purely personal satisfactions? Can you give another example showing how personal happiness is sought in terms of communal good? Which, do you think, is the right course? Why? What shall we do when our own personal desires and the desires of the community conflict?

2. Which of the sayings of Hillel do you like best? Why?

3. Compare Hillel's version of the Golden Rule (Do not unto others what thou wouldst not have done to thyself) with the more popular version you know. Which is the superior? Why?

CHAPTER III.

I. MISHNAH

Akabya ben Mahalalel said: reflect upon three things and thou wilt not come into the power of sin, know whence thou camest, and whither thou art going, and before whom thou wilt in future have to give account and reckoning.

Commentary

a) **Akabya ben Hahalalel** lived about the time of Hillel.

b) **Reflect Upon Three Things, etc.** We commit sin out of ignorance or thoughtlessness. If we were ever mindful of our humble human origins, conscious of our inevitable death, and ever feel the presence of God, we would be more sensitive and thoughtful. The rabbis express it thus: "If a man thinks of whence he comes, he is rendered humble; if he reflects whither he is going, he prizes worldly things lightly; and if he considers before whom he must give account, he obeys God's laws".*

II. MISHNAH

Rabbi Hanina, the vice-high Priest, said, pray for the welfare of the government, since but for the fear thereof men would swallow each other alive.

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* See Chapter II, Mishnah I e, f.

Commentary

a) Rabbi Hanina lived at the time when the Temple fell to the Romans in the year 70.

b) Pray for the Welfare of the Government, etc. The rabbis teach us to obey the laws of the governments under which we live. And in teaching this doctrine of obedience to law they were expressing one of the chief characteristics of Judaism. Unless we live under a system of laws we shall have nothing but anarchy, where the strong oppress the weak, and might is right. The Jewish people, in the course of their long history, lived under many governments, even as they are under many governments today. The rabbis laid down the principle which guides us today even as it has guided us in the past: "The law of the government is the law"—that is, the civil laws of the government are supreme in civil affairs. This has been the principle controlling the Jewish attitude toward the governments even when these governments were cruel, malicious and treacherous towards the Jews. In secular affairs, in the matters of business and social control, the government is supreme. But the laws of the governments may not dictate our religious views, and may not control our attitude towards our God. Here the Jew has insisted on remaining free. And when governments dealt savagely with him, ruining him in business, ostracising him socially, shutting him up in dingy ghettos, denying him every oppor-

tunity due every decent human being, even when they burned him in the streets of many cities, he refused to surrender his conscience in the matters of religion to the will of the despot. The stories of Hanukkah, the experiences of the Marranos in Spain, are good examples of that. Read the story of Hanania ben Teradion in the following Mishnah.

III. MISHNAH

Rabbi Hanania ben Teradion said, if two sit together and interchange no words of Torah, they are a meeting of scorners, concerning whom it is said, "The Godly man sitteth not in the seat of the scorners"; but if two sit together and interchange words of Torah, the Divine Presence abides between them; as it is said, "Then they that feared the Lord spake one with the other." (Mal. III, 16)

Commentary

a) **Rabbi Hanania ben Teradion** was one of the heroic teachers in Israel who surrendered his life rather than neglect the teaching of the Torah. Let us pause here and read a paragraph from Jewish history, as written by Professor Graetz: "Hadrian or his representatives directed their strictest attention to, and inflicted their severest punishments in two special cases—the assembling of schools and the ordination of disciples. It may have been suggested

to him that the continuance of the Law depended upon these two functions. If the instruction of pupils by their teachers could be stopped and the ordination of pupils as independent teachers could be prevented, then naturally a stoppage must occur in the life current of Judaism. It must be confessed that the Roman policy was well carried out by its supporters, and that they knew how to strike at the most vital point of Judaism. Severe sentences of death were inflicted upon those teachers who maintained schools, and on those who ordained disciples; even the communities were made answerable for them. The town and its environs, where an ordination took place, were condemned to destruction. . . ."

In retaliation of the Bar Cokba rebellion the Roman authorities slaughtered the outstanding Jewish teachers. One of them was Hanania ben Teradion. We read in Graetz: "Regardless of the warnings of Jose ben Kisma, he continued to hold his lectures until he was dragged to the tribunal. He was asked why he had acted in opposition to the imperial command, and he boldly answered, 'Because God had so commanded me.' He was wrapped up in a scroll of the Law and burnt on a stake of fresh rushes. Hanania's wife was also sentenced to death, and his daughter condemned to degradation."

Tradition has it that his loving pupils witnessed his terrific agony. They said to him,

"Master, what seest thou?" The dying man replied: "I see the parchment burning while the letters of the Law soar upward." That is, the parchment may be destroyed and the teacher may be executed, but the Torah, the living word of Judaism, rises above and defies the flames. "Open thy mouth, that the fire may enter and the sooner put an end to thy sufferings," his pupils advised him. "It is best that He who hath given the soul should also take it away," replied the great man; "no man may hasten his death." Even the executioner was moved to pity and remorse. He removed the wool that was placed on Hanania's heart to prolong his life and agony, fanned the flame, thus hurrying his death, and then himself plunged into the fire.

b) If Two Sit Together and Interchange no Words of Torah. A good example of rabbinic insistence that Torah, Jewish learning and Jewish idealism, permeate Jewish life.

IV. MISHNAH

Rabbi Simeon said, if three have eaten at a table and have spoken there no words of Torah, it is as if they had eaten of sacrifices to dead idols, of whom it is said, for all their tables are full of vomit and filthiness; the All-Present is not (in their thoughts) (Isaiah XXVIII. 8) but if three have eaten at a table and have spoken there words of Torah, it is as if they had eaten

at the table of the All-Present, to which the Scriptures may be applied, and He said unto me, this is the table before the Lord (Ezekiel XLI. 22)

Commentary

a) Rabbi Simeon (ben Yohai) was born about the year 100. He is believed to have been one of the seven disciples of Rabbi Akiba who were ordained by Rabbi Judah ben Baba, who was executed by the Roman authorities for teaching Judaism.

b) If Three Have Eaten at a Table, etc. A further example showing how the rabbis brought the idea of Torah into every-day life. Jewish law requires us to say a word of praise to God for the bounty of the earth before partaking of a meal and a word of prayer after the meal.

V.–VI. Omitted

VII. MISHNAH

Rabbi Halafta ben Dosa, of the village of Hanania, said, when ten people sit together and occupy themselves with the Torah, the Shechinah rests among them, as it is said: "God standeth in the congregation of the Godly." (Psalm LXXXIX. 14)

Commentary

One more example of the place of Torah in the every-day life of the Jewish people.

VIII. MISHNAH

Rabbi Eleazar, of Bartotha, said, give unto Him what is His, seeing that thou and what thou hast are His. This is also expressed by David, who said: "For all things come of Thee and of Thine own have we given Thee." (I. Chronicles XXIX. 14)

Commentary

a) Give Unto Him What is His, etc. What is His? Not only our things, our money, but all we are ourselves—our bodies, our minds, our hopes and our ambitions. "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might." The rabbis, as we have already seen, surrendered their very lives for the love of God and his Torah.

b) Rabbi Eleazar, of Bartotha, lived shortly after the fall of the Temple in the year 70. He was very generous in his charity. The following incident is reported of him in the Talmud: "The collectors of charity funds used to hide themselves whenever they saw Eleazar, of the village of Bartotha, because he was in the habit of giving them everything he happened to possess. One day he was going to the market place in order to buy a wedding outfit for his daughter, when the collectors espied him, and tried to hide themselves. Eleazar, however, followed them and said, 'I adjure you to tell me for what purpose you are collecting?' 'For a

marriage between an orphaned boy and an orphaned girl,' they replied. 'By the service of the Temple! They have precedence over my daughter,' exclaimed he, and putting together all that he had, he gave it to them, except one *zuz* that remained in his possession."

IX. and X. Omitted

XI. MISHNAH

Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa said, he in whom the fear of sin comes before wisdom, his wisdom shall endure; but he in whom wisdom comes before the fear of sin, his wisdom shall not endure.

Commentary

a) Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa was a pupil of Johanan ben Zakkai.

b) He in Whom the Fear of Sin Comes Before Wisdom, etc. "Fear of Sin" is our natural aversion to what is wrong and ugly; wisdom is good sense that we learn or acquire through experience. What Hanina ben Dosa says is that our natural aversion for the wrong and the unworthy is stronger and in the end serves us better than the acquired learning. Do you agree with Hanina ben Dosa on this point?

XII. MISHNAH

He (Hanina ben Dosa) used to say: he whose works exceed his wisdom, his wisdom shall en-

dure; but he whose wisdom exceeds his works, his wisdom shall not endure.

Commentary

Important as learning may be, practice is better. Right conduct, good actions are indispensable to the service of God.

XIII. MISHNAH

He (Hanina ben Dosa) used to say: he in whom the spirit of his fellow-creatures takes delight, in him the spirit of the All-Present takes delight; and he in whom the spirit of his fellow-creatures takes no delight, in him the spirit of the All-Present takes not delight.

XIV. MISHNAH

Rabbi Dosa ben Horkinas said, morning sleep, midday wine, children's talk, and sitting in the assemblies of the vulgar, put a man out of the world.

Commentary

a) Rabbi Dosa ben Horkinas lived at the time of Johanan ben Zakkai.

b) Morning Sleep, etc. Our teacher is cautioning us against sloth and self-indulgence. Laziness, intemperance, idle talk, vulgar associates rob us of moral strength. The wise man in the book of Proverbs warns us: "How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou

arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little (more) sleep, a little (more) slumber, a little (more) folding of the hands to sleep—so shall thy poverty come as a runner, and thy want as an armed man."

XV. Omitted

XVI. MISHNAH

Rabbi Ishmael said: be submissive to a superior, affable to a suppliant and receive all men with cheerfulness.

Commentary

a) Rabbi Ishmael was a little boy when the Temple fell in the year 70.

b) Be Submissive to a Superior, etc. As upright men, Rabbi Ishmael tells us, we should show ourselves at our best at all times to all people. It may be very difficult to bend our will to a superior, particularly when this superior is cruel, but that is when we show ourselves as we really are.

XVII. MISHNAH

Rabbi Akiba said: jesting and levity lead a man on to lewdness. Tradition is a fence to the Torah; tithes are a fence to riches; vows are a fence to abstinence; a fence to wisdom is silence.

Commentary

a) Rabbi Akiba. Read the chapter on Akiba in Part II of this book.

b) Jesting and Levity, etc. In themselves jesting and levity are not bad; they are bad only when they are carried to extremes, thus leading to vulgarity. "Holy inspiration does not rest upon man when he is in a mood of grief, or indolence, or laughter," say the sages of the Talmud.

c) Tradition is a Fence to the Torah. See Chapter I, Mishnah I, b, and f.

d) Tithes are a Fence to Riches. A portion of one's harvest had to go to the poor, according to Bible law. When we gather our harvests, we must remember those who have no harvests to gather. When we are thus merciful, God blesses the work of our hands.

e) Vows Are a Fence to Abstinence. Firm resolutions, seriously made, help a man resist temptation and hold him to a high standard.

f) A Fence to Wisdom is Silence. "Whoso is profuse of words causeth sin," say the rabbis. It is the part of wisdom to be silent, to listen and understand.

XVIII. MISHNAH

He (Akiba) used to say: beloved is man in that he was created in the image of God, greater love was proven to him in that he was created

in the image of God, as it is said, 'In the image of God made He man.' (Gen. IX. 6)
Beloved are Israel in that they are called sons of God, as it is said: 'Sons are ye to the Lord your God.' (Deut. XIV. 1)
Beloved are Israel, for unto them was given a precious instrument. Greater love was proved to them in that there was given to them the precious instrument whereby the world was created, as it is said, 'For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not My law.' (Prov. IV. 2)

Commentary

Three doctrines of Judaism are embodied in the above mishnah by Akiba: a) man is made in the image of God; b) Israel is called of God; c) The Torah was given by God to Israel.

a) Man is Made in the Image of God. "In the image of God made He man," we read in the book of Genesis. Therefore it is man's duty "to walk in the ways of God". The rabbis have in mind not a physical kinship between God and man, but a purely spiritual one. They explain, "As God is merciful and gracious, so be thou merciful and gracious; as God is called righteous, so be thou righteous; as God is holy, so do thou strive to be holy; as He clothes the naked, nurses the sick, comforts the sorrowing and buries the dead, so should man." Thus, man is made "in the image of God" in that God has endowed him with the ability to rise to the

highest and noblest, and as he rises in the scale of human excellence, so does he realize the image of God.

b) Israel is Called of God. We often hear the phrase "the Chosen People" applied to the Jews. By "the Chosen People" we Jews mean not that we are selected by God for special favors; not that we are authorized to rule over others; not that we are better than others; we simply mean that we are chosen by God to carry forward certain religious ideals. We are chosen as the servant of God. The sentence from Genesis describing Abraham's pioneering career, describes the role of Israel as "the chosen people": "And the Lord spoke unto Abraham saying, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee." And in the book of Exodus we read: "We have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now, therefore, if ye will hearken unto My voice, indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be Mine own treasure from among all peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." The Jewish mission is to "be a blessing" by advancing religious idealism.

c) The Torah — Israel's Good Doctrine. Through the Torah, God makes Himself known to Israel; it expresses His will in the world; by

it Israel is sanctified. Israel, God and Torah form an indivisible unit. See Chapter I, Mishnah Ia.

Akiba's thought is that these three are a manifestation of God's love.

XIX. MISHNAH

Everything is foreseen, yet freedom of choice is given; and the world is judged by goodness; and all is according to the amount of the work.

Commentary

a) Everything is Foreseen, etc. Are we free to choose our own paths through life or are our paths determined for us by powers beyond our control? This is one of the questions that has disturbed mankind for many centuries. If what we do is the result of our own free will, then we are entitled to whatever praise or blame that may accompany our work. But we know from our every day experience that we are not entirely free to think and act as we will. For example, we go through life bearing a certain name, belonging to a certain group of people, adhering to a certain religion, and we are tall or short, stout or frail, not because we ourselves made up our minds to be what we are. From our parents and grandparents we inherited our bodies, and from the world in which we live we inherited our language, our customs, our manners, our ideas, our good and our bad habits. And so there are some who say that we are not

free to choose our own ways through life, that our paths have been laid out for us by our heredity and environment. And if this is so, then we are not to be held responsible for what we may do. There is a good deal of truth to both sides of the argument. Akiba tries to harmonize these two arguments. Do you agree with him?

XX. MISHNAH

He (Akiba) used to say: everything is given on pledge, and a net is spread for all the living; the shop is open; and the dealer gives credit; and the ledger lies open; and the hand writes; and whosoever wishes to borrow may come and borrow; but the collectors regularly make their daily round; and exact payment from man whether he be content or not; and they have that whereon they may rely in their demand; and the judgment is a judgment of truth; and everything is prepared for the feast.

Commentary

R. Travers Herford explains the above statements by Akiba as follows: "The theme is the divine justice and the retribution with which it visits good deeds and bad ones. The solemn force of the thought is not helped by the terms of the comparison with a tradesman or moneylender keeping his books and collecting his debts. It would be quite untrue and unjust to charge the Rabbis, on the strength of this passage, with teaching that the relation of man to

God is merely that of debtor and creditor. Akiba used a metaphor which no doubt would go home to some of his hearers; but what he was illustrating was the justness of God in dealing with men. And the point of the lesson is not that God is severe but that he can be trusted. 'They have whereon to rely, and the judgment is a judgment of truth'. This affirmation of the absolute justice of God is one of the unshakeable foundations of the Jewish religion through all its history. The last clause means that all have their part in the future life, and enter upon it after they have, in terms of the metaphor, paid their debts. The sinner, after he has suffered the retribution imposed upon him by the divine justice, is thence forward no longer a sinner, and may enter the 'banquet'."

XXI. MISHNAH

Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah said: if there is no Torah there is no worldly occupation, and if there be no worldly occupation there is no Torah. If there is no wisdom there is no fear, and if there is no fear there is no wisdom. If there is no knowledge there is no understanding, and if there is no understanding there is no knowledge. If there is no meal there is no Torah, and if there is no Torah there is no meal.

Commentary

a) **Eleazar ben Azariah** was born about

the year 70 and was one of the outstanding teachers at Jabneh.

b) If There is No Torah, etc. There can be no spiritual life unless there is a physical life, and a physical life is not real and vital unless there is a spiritual. There can be no Torah—no intellectual endeavor—unless there is some material basis for it, but a sheer material existence without the intellectual is meaningless. Similarly, wisdom and fear, knowledge and understanding, religion and material subsistence are interdependent—one making the other possible, one making the other meaningful.

XXII. MISHNAH

He (Eleazar ben Azariah) used to say: one whose wisdom is greater than his deeds, to what is he like? To a tree whose branches are many, but whose roots are few; the wind comes and plucks it up and overturns it upon its face, as it is said, and he shall be like a lonely juniper tree in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places of the wilderness, a salt land and not inhabited (Jeremiah XVII. 6); but he whose work exceeds his wisdom, to what is he like? To a tree whose branches are few, but whose roots are many, so that even if all the winds in the world come and blow upon it, it can not be stirred from its place, as it is said, and he shall be like a tree planted

by the water; and that spreadeth out its roots by the river; and shall not be troubled in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit (Jeremiah XVII. 8).

Questions and Topics for Discussion
Based on Chapter III.

Questions:

1. Who was Hananiah ben Teradion?
2. What do the rabbis mean by "give unto Him what is His?"
3. What do the rabbis teach on the point of "fear of sin"?
4. What do the rabbis say is the relationship between the love of man and the love of God? (See Mishnah XIII)
5. Who was Akiba? Which of the stories told of him do you like best? Which of his sayings do you like best?
6. What according to the Mishnah is the relationship between the material and the spiritual?

Topics for Discussion:

1. The Mishnah teaches us to obey the laws of our country. But what shall we do when we think that certain laws are bad? Shall we obey them blindly? Shall we simply violate them? Why do you answer the way you do?
2. Are we free to think and act as we will or is our choice determined for us?
3. Man, say the rabbis, basing themselves on biblical teaching, is made "in the image of God". God being spiritual, having no body, how can man be made in His image?
4. What do the rabbis mean by "the chosen people?"

CHAPTER IV.

I. MISHNAH

Ben Zoma said: who is wise? He who learns from all men, as it is said, 'From all my teachers I have gotten understanding' (Psalm CXIX. 99). Who is strong? He who controls his passions, as it is said, 'Better is the long-suffering than the mighty, and one that ruleth his spirit than one who taketh a city' (Prov. XVI. 32). Who is rich? He who rejoiceth in his portion, as it is said, 'When thou eatest the labour of thy hands happy art thou and it shall be well with thee' (Ps. CXXVIII. 2) Happy art thou in this world, and it shall be well with thee in the world to come.' Who is honoured? He who honors mankind, as it is said, 'For them that honor Me will I honor, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.' (Ps. II. 30)

Commentary

a) **Ben Zoma** lived in the second half of the first century. We have already read a statement of his. (See introduction, p. 16.) Another famous statement of his on the difference between the grateful and the ungrateful is the following: "A grateful guest says: That host be remembered for good! How many times he brought up before me; how many portions he placed before me; how many cakes he offered me! But the ill-willed guest says: What did I

eat of his (anyway)! (Only) a piece of bread, a bite of meat? What did I drink? A cup of wine! whatever he did he did for the sake of himself and his children (and not for me)."

b) Who is Wise, etc. These words are clear, and need no explanations.

II. MISHNAH

Ben Azzai said: Be swift toward a light precept, and flee from transgression, for precept leads to precept and transgression to transgression. For the reward of a precept is a precept and the reward of a transgression is a transgression.

Commentary

a) Ben Azzai was a fellow student of ben Zoma's, and a disciple of Akiba. He preached that the most important doctrine in Judaism is the brotherhood of man.

b) Be Swift Toward a Light Precept, etc. See Chapter I. Mishnah I, commentary b., where Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi expresses the same thought.

c) For Precept Leads to Precept, etc. The true reward for a deed of kindness is the enrichment of our personalities by the chance it affords us to do another deed of kindness; the true punishment for a vulgar act is that we become vulgar. That is, the true reward consists in our rising in the scale of human excellence;

the true punishment in our sinking in the scale of human worth.

III. MISHNAH

He (ben Azzai) used to say, despise not any man, and regard nothing as impossible; for there is not a man that has not his hour, and there is not a thing that has not its place.

Commentary

Great or small, every man and every thing has some function in the purposes of God. There should be, therefore, a bond of sympathy between man and the world about him, for all comes from the hand of God.

IV.–XIV. Omitted

XV. MISHNAH

Rabbi Eleazar ben Shammua said, let the honour of thy disciples be as dear to thee as thine own, and the honour of thine associate be like the fear of thy master, and the fear of thy master like the fear of Heaven.

Commentary

a) Rabbi Eleazar ben Shammua lived in the second century.

b) Let the Honour of Thy Disciples, etc. The Torah is sacred, and any one associated with the Torah should be held in high regard; the closer he is associated with the Torah, the

more reverence is due him. This Mishnah is a good example of the esteem the Jewish people held for the scholar of the Torah.

XVI. MISHNAH

Rabbi Judah said, be cautious in study, for an error in study may amount to presumptuous sin.

Commentary

a) Rabbi Judah. That is, Rabbi Judah ben Illai, a disciple of Akiba.

b) Be Cautious in Study, etc. A further example of the importance of Torah in the minds of the Jewish masters.

XVII. MISHNAH

Rabbi Simeon said, there are three crowns: the crown of Torah, the crown of Priesthood, and the crown of Kingship, but the crown of a good name excels them all.

Commentary

a) Rabbi Simeon. That is, Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai. See Chapter III, Mishnah IV.

b) There are Three Crowns, etc. Exalted as the crown of Torah was in the minds of the Jewish masters, the crown of an upright character was superior; important as were the crown of priesthood and royalty, the crown of a good name was superior.

XVIII. MISHNAH

Rabbi Nehorai said, betake thyself to a place of Torah, and say not that it shall come after thee, for thine associates will fulfill it through thee. And rely not on thine own understanding.

Commentary

a) Rabbi Nehorai. We do not know anything of this teacher in Israel. Even his full name is unknown to us.

b) Betake Thyself to a Place of Torah, etc. The good life is the life of Torah. The best place to live is there where Torah is studied. A further example of the stress on Torah in Judaism.

XIX. Omitted

XX. MISHNAH

Rabbi Mattithiah ben Heresh said, be first in greeting every man; and be a tail to lions and not a head to foxes.

Commentary

a) Rabbi Mattithiah ben Heresh left Palestine for Rome just before the Bar Cokba war. In Rome he founded a school and thus was among the very first to transplant the rabbinic culture from Asia to Europe.

a) Rabbi Simeon ben Eleazar lived in the in simple courtesy.

c) And be a Tail to Lions and not a Head to Foxes. It is better to serve in a humble degree associated with great men than to be at the head of things and associated with small men.

XXI. MISHNAH

Rabbi Jacob used to say, this world is like a vestibule before the world to come; prepare thyself in the vestibule that thou mayest enter into the banquet hall.

Commentary

a) Rabbi Jacob lived in the second half of the second century.

b) This World is Like a Vestibule, etc. The rabbis believed in a hereafter, where the just were rewarded and the wicked punished. This world was thus a preparation for the world to come.

XXII. Omitted

XXIII. MISHNAH

Rabbi Simeon ben Eleazar said, do not appease thy fellow in the hour of his anger, comfort him not in the hour when his dead lies before him, question him not in the hour of his vow, and strive not to see him in the hour of his disgrace.

Commentary

a) Rabbi Simeon ben Eleazar lived in the second half of the second century.

b) Do not Appease Thy Fellow in the Hour of His Anger, etc. Good intentions are not enough. We may mean well and seek to do nothing but good and, nevertheless, inflict pain on our friends. Good intentions must be accompanied by intelligence and consideration.

XXIV.–XXVI. Omitted

XXVII. MISHNAH

Rabbi said: look not at the pitcher but at what is contains; there may be a new flask full of old wine, and an old flask that has not even new wine in it.

Commentary

a) Rabbi. That is, Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi.

b) There May Be a New Flask Full of Old Wine, etc. We should not judge by appearances. "Man looks upon appearances, but God looks into the heart," the prophet Samuel tells us. Read the story of Joshua ben Hananiah and the princess, in the chapter on Joshua ben Hananiah in part II of this book.

XXVIII. MISHNAH

Rabbi Eleazar ha-Kappar said: envy and lust and (craving after) honor drive a man out of the world.

Commentary

a) Eleazar ha-Kappar was a friend of Judah ha-Nasi.

b) Envy and Lust and (Craving After) Honor, etc. Envy and greed and hunger for honors, kill the best that is in a man and eventually rob him of his very life.

XXIX. Omitted

Questions and Topics for Discussion Based on Chapter IV.

Questions:

1. According to ben Zoma, who are:
   a) the wise?
   b) the strong?
   c) the rich?
   d) the honored?
2. What do the rabbis mean by "the Crown of a Good Name"?
3. What do the rabbis mean by "look not at the pitcher but at what it contains"? Tell a story from the experience of Joshua ben Hananiah on this point.

Topics for Discussion:

1. What does the Mishnah mean by "the reward for a precept is a precept and the reward for a transgression is a transgression"? Give an example from your own personal observation proving or disproving the doctrine of the rabbis.
2. What do the rabbis teach on the subject of seeking glory? Give an example from your own personal observation proving or disproving the teaching of the rabbis.

CHAPTER V.

I. MISHNAH

By ten sayings the world was created. What does this teach? Could not the world have been made with only one saying? But it was to exact penalty from the wicked who destroy the world which was created by ten sayings, and to give good reward to the righteous who establish the world which was created by ten sayings.

Commentary

a) In form, this chapter (as well as the following) differs from the previous four in that the sayings are not given in the names of certain teachers; they are, rather, arranged in groups, based on numbers.

b) By Ten Sayings, etc. In the story of creation in Genesis I. "And God said" appears, according to this Mishnah, ten times; and in response to every time it was uttered by God, some aspect of the world was created. The Bible records only nine such utterances, but that is immaterial. The point the author of this Mishnah wishes to make is that the world is the result of a great deal of divine effort. Anyone who injures it or degrades it is therefore guilty of a great wrong; anyone who improves it is therefore entitled to much merit.

II. MISHNAH

There were ten generations from Adam to Noah, to make known how long-suffering God is, seeing that all those generations continued provoking Him, until He brought upon them the waters of the flood.

Commentary

The rabbis looked upon the flood as a punishment for wickedness. The lesson they draw from the Bible is that God did not punish the evil immediately. He waited and waited with the hope that punishment would not be necessary. For ten generations he was patient. Thus, their idea of God is, as expressed in the Bible, "Gracious, long-suffering, abundant in mercy and ever true."

III. — IX. Omitted

X. MISHNAH

There are seven marks of an uncultured, and seven of a wise man. The wise man does not speak before him who is greater in wisdom than he; he does not break in on the speech of his fellow; he is not hasty to answer; he questions according to the subject matter, and answers to the point; he speaks upon the first thing first and upon the last thing last; regarding that which he has not understood he says, I do not understand it, and he acknowledges

the truth. The reverse of all these is to be found in an uncultured man.

Commentary

This Mishnah states the difference between the cultured and the vulgar man.

XI. — XII. Omitted

XIII. MISHNAH

There are four characters among men: He who says, what is mine is mine and what is thine is thine, his is a neutral character—some say, this is a character like that of Sodom; he who says, what is mine is thine and what is thine is mine, is a boor; he who says, what is mine is thine and what is thine is thine, is a saint; he who says, what is thine is mine and what is mine is mine, is a wicked man.

XIV. MASHNAH

There are four kinds of tempers: He whom it it is easy to provoke and easy to pacify, his loss disappears in his gain; he whom it is hard to provoke and hard to pacify, his gain disappears in his loss; he whom it is hard to provoke and easy to pacify is a saint; he whom it is easy to provoke and hard to pacify is a wicked man.

Commentary

In the Shulhan Aruk, a popular code of Jewish law compiled in the sixteenth century, we

have the following description of the varieties of human dispositions.

"People differ widely with respect to their natures: there is one of an angry disposition who is always angry, and there is another who is sedate and never becomes angry, or becomes angry once in many years; there is one who is unduly haughty, and there is another who is unduly humble; one is a voluptuary, his soul is never satiated with desire, another possesses a pure heart and has not desire even for small things which are the necessities of life; one possesses an unbounded greed who is not satisfied with all the wealth the world possesses, as it is written, 'He that loveth money will not be satisfied with money'; another one is a shiftless fellow who is satisfied with little which does not even suffice him, and he does not seek to earn enough for his necessities; one afflicts himself with hunger, keeps on saving, and whatever he eats of his own he does so with grief; another who spends all his money freely. The same is true with all dispositions and views; e. g., the gay and the melancholy, the villain and the noble, the cruel and the compassionate, the gentle and the hard-hearted, and the like."

XV. MISHNAH

There are four qualities in disciples; he who quickly understands and quickly forgets, his gain disappears in his loss; he who understands

with difficulty and forgets with difficulty, his loss disappears in his gain; he who understands quickly and forgets with difficulty, his is a good portion; he who understands with difficulty and forgets quickly, his is an evil portion.

XVI. MISHNAH

As to almsgiving there are four dispositions: He who desires to give, but that others should not give, his eye is evil towards what appertains to others (since almsgiving brings blessing to the giver); he who desires that others should give, but will not give himself, his eye is evil against what is his own; he who gives and wishes others to give, is a saint; he who will not give and does not wish others to give, is a wicked man.

Commentary

Maimonides gives us what is probably the finest description of the quality of charity that we have in all our Jewish literature. His statement is often spoken of as the Golden Ladder of Charity.

There are eight degrees in alms-giving, one higher than the other.

The highest degree is to give assistance to a co-religionist who has fallen on evil times by presenting him with a gift or a loan, or entering into a partnership with him, or securing work

for him, thereby helping him to become self-supporting.

Inferior to this is giving charity to the poor in such a way that the giver and the recipient are unknown to each other.

Next in order is the donation of money to the charitable fund of the community, to which no contribution should be made without the donors feeling confident that the administration is honest, prudent and efficient.

Below this degree is the instance where the donor is aware to whom he is giving the alms but the recipient is unaware from whom he is receiving them. Inferior to this degree is the case where the recipient knows the identity of the donor, but the donor does not know the identity of the recipient.

The next four degrees in their order are:

The man who gives money to the poor before he is asked.

The man who gives money to the poor after he is asked.

The man who gives less than he should but does it graciously.

The man who gives grudgingly.

XVII. MISHNAH

There are four characters suggested by those who attend the house of study; he who goes and does not practise, secures the reward for

going; he who practises but does not go, secures the reward for practising: he who goes and practises is a saint; he who neither goes nor practises is a wicked man.

XVIII. MISHNAH

There are four qualities among those that sit before the wise; they are like a sponge, a funnel, a strainer or a sieve. A sponge, which sucks up everything; a funnel, which lets in at one end and out at the other; a strainer, which lets the wine pass out and retains the lees; a sieve, which lets out the bran and retains the fine flour.

Commentary

Compare this classification with the following made by Solomon ibn Gabirol:

"There are four mental types among human beings: the man who knows and is aware that he knows—he is wise, so inquire of him; the man who knows but is unaware that he knows —remind him and help him that he forget not (his knowledge) ; the man who is ignorant and knows that he is ignorant—teach him; the man who is ignorant but pretends to know—he is a fool, so keep away from him."

XIX. MISHNAH

Whenever love depends upon some material cause, with the passing away of that cause, the

love too passes away; but if it be not dependent upon such a cause, it will not pass away for ever.

XX. — XXVI. Omitted

Questions and Topics for Discussion
Based on Chapter V.

Questions:

1. What does the Mishnah teach on the subject of
   a) God's mercy?
   b) God's patience?
   Do you recall any Bible stories illustrating these?
2. How does the Mishnah appraise
   a) human character?
   b) human dispositions?

Topics for Discussion:

1. Look through your newspaper and clip all the items you can find that show human character to the best or the worst advantage. Compare these clippings with the teachings of the Mishnah.

2. Read Mishnah X. over again. What would you add to it as an important detail in the make-up of a cultured man? What detail stated in the Mishnah would you subtract as unimportant?

CHAPTER VI.

The following chapter did not form part of the original "Sayings of the Fathers". It was added by later teachers, to bring the number of the chapters in the tractate up to six, so that there might be a chapter for every one of the six Sabbaths between Pesah and Shebuot, when the "Sayings of the Fathers" are read. The whole chapter is an exaltation of Torah and the glorification of the man of Torah. The world begins and ends in Torah; life finds its meaning, its worth, its inspiration in Torah. By Torah Israel is united with his God.

The sages taught the following in the style of the Mishnah,—Blessed be He that made choice of them and their Mishnah.

MISHNAH

I.

R. Meir said: Whosoever labours in the Torah for its own sake merits many things; and not only so, but the whole world is indebted to him; he is called friend, beloved, a lover of the All-Present, a lover of mankind; it clothes him in meekness and reverence; it fits him to become just, pious, upright and faithful; it keeps him far from sin, and brings him near virtue; through him the world enjoys counsel and sound knowledge, understanding and strength, as it is said, counsel is mine, and sound knowl-

edge; I am understanding; I have strength (Prov. VIII. 14); and it gives him sovereignty and dominion and discerning judgment; to him the secrets of the Torah are revealed; he is made like a never-failing fountain, and like a river that flows with ever-sustained vigour; he becomes modest, long-suffering, and forgiving of insults; and it magnifies and exalts him above all things.

II.

R. Joshua, the son of Levi, said, every day a Bat-Kol (heavenly voice) goes forth from Mount Sinai, proclaiming these words, woe to mankind for contempt of the Torah, for whoever does not labor in the Torah is said to be under the Divine censure, as it is said, as a ring of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman who turneth aside from discretion (Prov. XI. 22); and it says, and the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables. Read not charuth (graven), but cheruth (freedom), for no man is free but he who labors in the Torah. But whosoever labors in the Torah, behold he shall be exalted, as it is said, and from Mattanah to Nachaliel, and from Nachaliel to Bamoth (Numb. XXI. 19).

III.

He who learns from his fellow a single chapter, a single rule, a single verse, a single expression, or even a single letter, ought to pay him honor, for so we find with David, King of Israel, who learnt only two things from Ahitophel, and yet regarded him as his master, his guide and his familiar friend, as it is said, but it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide and my familiar friend (Psalm IV. 14). Now, is it not an argument from minor to major? If David, the King of Israel, who learned only two things from Ahitophel, regarded him as his master, guide and familiar friend, how much more ought one who learns from his fellow a chapter, rule, verse, expression, or even a single letter, to pay him honor? And honor is nothing but Torah, as it is said, the wise shall inherit honor (Prov. III. 35); and the perfect shall inherit good (Ibid. XXVIII. 10). And good is nothing but Torah, as it is said, for I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my Torah (Ibid. IV. 2).

IV.

This is the way that is becoming for the study of the Torah: A morsel of bread with salt thou must eat, and water by measure thou must drink, thou must sleep upon the ground, and live a life of trouble the while thou toilest in the Torah. If thou doest thus, happy shalt thou be and it shall be well with thee (Ps. CXXVIII.

2); happy shalt thou be in this world, and it shall be well with thee in the world to come.

V.

Seek not greatness for thyself, and court not honor; let thy works exceed thy learning; and crave not after the table of kings; for thy table is greater than theirs, and thy crown is greater than theirs, and thy employer is faithful to pay thee the reward of thy work.

VI.

The Torah is greater than the priesthood and than royalty, seeing that royalty demands thirty qualifications, the priesthood twenty-four, while the Torah is acquired by forty-eight. And these are they: by audible study; by distinct pronunciation; by understanding and discernment of the heart; by awe, reverence, meekness, cheerfulness; by ministering to the sages, by attaching oneself to colleagues, by discussion with disciples; by sedateness; by knowledge of the scripture and of the Mishnah; by moderation in business, in intercourse with the world, in pleasure, in sleep, in conversation, in laughter; by long-suffering; by a good heart; by faith in the wise; by resignation under chastisement; by recognizing one's place, rejoicing in one's portion, putting a fence to one's words, claiming no merit for one's self; by being beloved, loving the All-

Present, loving mankind, loving just courses, rectitude and reproof; by keeping oneself far from honor, not boasting of one's learning, nor delighting in giving decisions; by bearing the yoke with one's fellow, judging him favorably, and leading him to truth and peace; by being composed in one's study; by asking and answering, hearing and adding thereto (by one's own reflection); by learning with the object of teaching, and by learning with the object of practising; by making one's master wiser, fixing attention upon his discourse, and reporting a thing in the name of him who said it. So thou hast learnt, whosoever reports a thing in the name of him that said it brings deliverance into the world, as it is said, and Esther told the king in the name of Mordecai (Esther II. 22).

VII.

Great is the Torah which gives life to those that practice it in this world and in the world to come, as it is said, for they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh (Prov. IV. 22); and it says, it shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones (Ibid. III. 8); and it says, it is a tree of life to them that grasp it, and of them that uphold it, every one is rendered happy (Ibid III. 18); and it says, for they shall be a chaplet of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck (Ibid. I.

9); and it says, it shall give to thine head a chaplet of grace: a crown of glory it shall deliver to thee (Ibid. IV. 9); and it says, for by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased (Ibid. IX. 2); and it says, length of days is in its right hand; in its left hand are riches and honor (Ibid. III. 16); and it says, for length of days, and years of life, and peace shall they add to thee (Ibid. III. 2).

VIII.

R. Simeon, the son of Judah, in the name of R. Simeon, the son of Yohai, said, beauty, strength, riches, honor, wisdom, old age and a hoary head and children are comely to the righteous and comely to the world, as it is said, the hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness (Ibid. XVI. 31); and it says, the glory of young men is their strength, and the adornment of old men is the hoary head (Ibid. XX. 29); and it says, a crown unto the wise is their riches (Ibid. XIV. 24); and it says, children's children are the crown of old men, and the adornment of children are their fathers (Ibid. XVII. 6); and it is said, then the moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed; for the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his elders shall be glory (Isaiah XXIV. 23). R. Simeon, the son of Menasya, said these seven qualifications which the sages enumerated as becoming to the

righteous were all realised in Rabbi Judah the Prince, and in his sons.

IX.

R. Jose, the son of Kisma, said, I was once walking by the way, when a man met me and saluted me, and I returned the salutation. He said to me, Rabbi, from what place art thou? I said to him, I come from a great city of sages and scribes. He said to me, if thou art willing to dwell with us in our place, I will give thee a thousand thousand golden dinars and precious stones and pearls. I said to him, Wert thou to give me all the silver and gold and precious stones and pearls in the world, I would not dwell anywhere but in a home of the Torah; and thus it is written in the book of Psalms by the hands of David, King of Israel, the law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver (Psalm CXIX. 72); and not only so, but in the hour of man's departure neither silver nor gold nor precious stones nor pearls accompany him, but only Torah and good works, as it said, when thou walkest it shall lead thee; when thou liest down it shall watch over thee; and when thou awakest it shall talk with thee (Prov. VI. 22); when thou walkest it shall lead thee—in this world; when thou liest down it shall watch over thee—in the grave; and when thou awakest it shall talk with thee—in the world to come. And it says,

the silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts (Haggai II. 8).

X.

Five possessions the Holy One, blessed be He, made especially His own in His world, and these are they: the Torah, heaven and earth, Abraham, Israel, and the house of the sanctuary. Whence know we this of the Torah? Because it is written, the Lord possessed me as the beginning of His way, before His works, from of old (Prov. VIII. 22). Whence of heaven and earth? Because it is written, thus saith the Lord, the heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: what manner of house will ye build unto Me? And what manner of place for rest? (Isaiah LXVI. 1); and it says, how manifold are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy possessions (Psalm CIV. 24). Whence of Abraham? Because it is written, and He blessed him, and said, blessed be Abraham of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth (Genesis XIV. 19). Whence of Israel? Because it is written, till Thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over which Thou hast acquired (Exod. XV. 16); and it says, as for the saints that are in the earth, they are the noble ones in whom is all My delight (Psalm XVI. 3). Whence of the house of the sanctuary? Because it is written, the place, O Lord,

which Thou has made Thee to dwell in, the sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have prepared (Exod. XV. 17); and it says, and He brought them to the border of His sanctuary, to this mountain which His right hand had acquired (Psalm LXXVII. 54).

XI.

Whatsover the Holy One, blessed be He, created in His world, He created but for His glory, as it is said, everything that is called by My name, it is for My glory I have created it, I have formed it, yea, I have made it (Isaiah XLIII. 7), and it says, the Lord shall reign forever and ever (Exod. XV. 18).

"When God created the world," say our sages, "it was decreed that the heaven was God's heaven and that the earth belonged to the children of men. But when the Torah was given to Israel, it was ordained that thenceforth those who are below should lift themselves on high, and that those above should descend on earth."

"Rabbi Hananiah ben Akashya said, The Holy one, blessed be He, was pleased to make Israel worthy; wherefore He gave them a copious Torah and many commandments, as it is said, 'It pleased the Lord, for His righteousness' sake, to magnify the Torah and make it honorable'. (Isaiah XLII. 21)."

Based on Chapter VI.

We have read the statements of the rabbis on many subjects touching human life. Compile a note book on "What We Jews Believe", basing yourself on the sayings and the stories of the rabbis as you find them expressed in the Mishnah and our comments upon the Mishnah. Organize your note book under such headings as, Torah, justice, truth, peace, good manners, "the chosen people", wealth, honor, etc.

PART TWO

NOTE

The men described in the following pages belong to the group of Jewish scholars known as "Tannaim". "Tanna" (the singular) is derived from the Aramaic for "to teach." In general, the Tannaim were the teachers of the oral law; in particular, they were those masters of the oral law who are quoted in the Mishnah. The Mishnah is the ground-work of the Talmud. (See Introduction).

For a list and the biographies of the Tannaim, see:

Jewish Encyclopaedia, art. "Tannaim."

Moses Mielziner, "Introduction to the Talmud."

Hermann L. Strack, "Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash."

I. Hillel

(70 B. C. E. — 10 C. E.)

One day in the middle of the first century B. C. E., a young man came to Jerusalem from far-away Babylon. He was an unknown youth, poor and friendless. Before many years had passed, the stranger won a very high reputation for himself as a gentle soul and interpreter of the Law; before many more years had passed, he rose to the highest position it was within the gift of the Jewish people to offer their faithful sons; before many generations passed, his name grew into a tradition and an ornament, falling upon the aching heads of his unhappy people like a benediction after prayer. Pious Jews thanked God for having given them Hillel, Hillel the Prince. Many, many generations have passed since he was gathered unto his fathers, but the name of Hillel lives in the minds of his people. We still repeat his wise sayings, we still love to retell the many stories told of him, we still refer to his interpretations of the Torah.

He came from Babylon. The Jews had been taken to Babylon as war captives in the year 586 B. C. E. The Babylonian army invaded Judah, burned down the Temple, laid waste the country, killed thousands of the able-bodied men and carried most of the people into exile, leaving behind only the old, the sick, the crippled. Seventy years later many of these captives were back in their

native land. Just as Babylon had conquered Judah, so was Babylon conquered by Persia and the Persian invader freed the Jewish captives. Many of them returned and rebuilt Jerusalem and the Temple; some of them, however, remained in exile. Hillel came of a family that had remained in Babylon.

Hillel might have been very proud of his family tree, had he been a man given to pride or vanity, for, on his mother's side, tradition traced his descent to King David.

He came to Jerusalem. In Babylon he had studied the Torah under Babylonian Jewish masters. The Jewish people had organized schools there at a very early date. They wanted to remember their traditions and continue their religious practices as best they could in a foreign land. But in Hillel's day Jerusalem was the center of Jewish learning. The famous masters, Shammai and Abtalion, taught in Jerusalem. They were known and respected throughout the Jewish world. Many students came to them from many parts of the world. Hillel heard of them and came to study under them.

The Jewish life in Jerusalem was centered around the Temple. It was the national shrine. There the people offered their sacrifices and made their offerings. There the priests ministered at the altar and there the Levites served. From every part of Palestine came the pious Jewish people, from every village and country side, with

baskets on their shoulders holding the first fruit of the season which they placed upon the altar as an offering to the Lord their God. Some carried little lambs or doves. Three times a year especially all the able bodied men and boys were required to journey to the central sanctuary, once on Pesah, once on Shebuot, and once on Sukkot. Jerusalem must have been beautiful and colorful as the many pilgrims thronged the city, the king himself leading the procession, singing pilgrim songs (some of them preserved in the Bible as Psalms).

But even in those days Judaism was not only worship and sacrifices and prayers. It was, also, study and contemplation and understanding; it was especially a way of life with a great deal of stress on right conduct between a man and his fellows. Therefore, beside the Temple there developed centers of study. Many of them, in the course of the years, became synagogues, especially when the Temple was finally destroyed by the Romans in the year 70.

Shammai and Abtalion taught the Torah in one of these schools. They were trying to explain the Law in such a way as to enable a man to practise its every command. "Not study but practice is the important thing," these scholars said; but before a man may practise a certain law or fulfill a certain command stated in the Bible, he must understand it. Moreover, many centuries passed since the Bible laws were written down,

and in the course of these hundreds of years, the Jewish people came upon new circumstances. The old laws had to be interpreted anew and made to conform to the new requirements.

Thoughts of Jerusalem must have gone through Hillel's head as he tramped his way to the Holy City. Besides study under Shammai and Abtalion, Jerusalem probably held other attractions for him. He had read of it, even as we read of it to-day; he remembered all the glories of Zion, for he knew that it was the city of David, the great king of Israel, his own ancester, who not only built the city and organized the national life of his people, but who also was known as a poet and a musician. Some of the pilgrim songs that perhaps Hillel himself sang were written by David. Jerusalem was also calling to Hillel because there the prophets preached their marvelous sermons demanding justice, love and peace; there the scribes labored to preserve the Torah; there thousands of Jews surrendered their lives in defense of their religion; there mighty debates were held. The Bible had not yet been finally fixed. Scholars were debating what books shall be included and why, and what books shall be excluded and why. All this must have been going through Hillel's mind and luring him on to the city built by David.

He was a poor boy. He knew no one in the city. To earn his daily bread he took to wood-cutting. He used half of his meager income for his per-

sonal needs and half to gain admission to the school to listen to the lectures of Shammai and Abtalion. There was no tuition fee, for the Jewish sages refused to accept any pay for their teaching. The Torah, they said, should not be used as a spade wherewith to dig for one's own enrichment; the Torah should be taught out of love for it. And most of them were poor men who earned their daily bread by following very humble occupations. Hillel was a wood-cutter; Joshua ben Hananiah was a charcoal burner; Akiba was a shepherd; Meir was a scribe. But though no tuition was charged, a little money was needed to maintain the school building and pay the janitor for his labor; a small charge was therefore made.

One Sabbath eve Hillel found himself lacking the admission fee. He had not earned anything that day and was thus unable to secure admission to the synagogue. But he was eager to hear the exposition of the Torah his revered masters Shammai and Abtalion were to present. He climbed up to one of the windows in the synagogue and tried to hear what was being said by his teachers. The night was cold and a heavy snow was falling, but Hillel sat there, crouched against the window pane. The next morning, when Shammai and Abtalion came for Sabbath prayer, they found the synagogue darker than usual. They looked about and saw something in one of the windows. They climbed up to see what it was, removed the snow, and found Hillel numb with

cold. Pious men though they were, and strict as they were in the observance of every detail regulating the Sabbath, they kindled a fire and revived Hillel. "Such a one," they said, "is worth our breaking the Sabbath."

Afterwards, when the wise men of Israel preached the word of God to the people, they would say: When the rich and the poor would appear before the King of Kings to give an account of their lives on earth, God would ask them, "Why did not you study the Torah?" If one offered excuses of poverty and said, "I was a poor man, my energy and my mind were occupied with providing bread for my family; I was poor and could not afford the leisure to study," God would reply, "Wert thou poorer than Hillel?" Thus this sentence—"Art thou poorer than Hillel?"—became a proverb in Israel.

Jewish tradition holds a beautiful garland of stories told of Hillel. These stories may or may not be literally true. Some of them are true; perhaps some are not. But literally true or not, they do give us a picture of the great Jewish teacher; they show us what he thought, how he lived and taught.

A number of stories show his patience, forbearance and beautiful humility.

One day a heathen came to Shammai and said that he would accept Judaism if Shammai taught him the written Torah without any reference to the oral Torah. He believed only in the written

part. He did not believe in the oral tradition and would not study it. Shammai flew into a rage and drove the man from his home. The man then went to Hillel and told him that he would become a Jew provided Hillel taught him only the written Torah, ignoring altogether the oral one. Hillel accepted him on his own terms, and gave him the first lesson in Judaism. He began with the Hebrew alphabet. The next day the man came for his second lesson. Hillel pointed to the *aleph* and called it *tav,* he pointed to the *bet* and called it *shin.* The man was puzzled. "But yesterday," he complained, "you told me something else." "Did you believe me," replied the wise teacher, "when I told you this was an *aleph* and that a *bet*? Then, similarly, you must believe the wise teachers of Israel when they make their oral explanations of the written Torah, because the oral Torah is as holy as the written. In fact, without the oral explanations we cannot understand the written one at all."

A heathen blundered into a synagogue one day and heard a scholar of the Torah read: "And thou shalt speak to all who are wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garment to consecrate him, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office. These are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a tunic of chequer work, a mitre, and a girdle; and they shall make holy garments for Aaron

thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office. And they shall take the gold and the blue and the purple and the scarlet and the fine linen." The heathen was dazzled by the description of these garments—an ephod, a robe, a girdle; rich colors—gold, blue, purple, scarlet! Would he not look beautiful in such gorgeous robes himself! And would not the people admire him in such splendor! He rushed to Shammai and said, "Convert me to Judaism on the condition that I become the High Priest." Shammai, in rage, ordered him out of his house. The heathen then went to Hillel. "Convert me to Judaism," said he, "on the condition that I become the High Priest." Unlike the impatient Shammai, Hillel invited his ignorant caller to take his first lesson in Judaism. "If you are to be the High Priest," said the wise Hillel, "you must know the duties of that office." They came upon the passage in the Bible which says, "And the common man that cometh nigh (to serve in the sanctuary) shall be put to death." The heathen was alarmed. "What does it mean?" he asked his teacher, "to whom does it refer?" "It refers to every man," said Hillel, "who was not of the priestly family. Even King David would not be exempted." The heathen thought, "If an Israelite is excluded from this privilege, how may I ever hope to rise to this office?" Something of the spirit of wisdom came to this man, thanks to Hillel's kindness and patience, and he remained a faithful student of the Torah.

Another story illustrating Hillel's patience and gentleness is that of a heathen who came to Hillel and said that he would accept Judaism provided Hillel taught him all of it in a few seconds—while he, the heathen, stood on one foot. He had gone to Shammai and Shammai drove him from his home. Hillel was unperturbed by the man's impudence. Yes, he said, he would teach him all of Judaism in just a few words, and he gave what came to be famous as Hillel's version of the Golden Rule: "What is hateful unto thee do not unto thy fellow." All the rest of the Torah is only an explanation of this central doctrine. And he sent the heathen home to study the commentary.

His patience was proverbial. One man entered into a wager with a friend that he could get Hillel to lose his temper. He bet him four hundred zuzim. He waited for an opportune moment. He knew that on Friday afternoon Hillel would be getting ready to welcome the Sabbath. Late that afternoon he rushed into Hillel's home, unannounced, shouting, "Where is Hillel? Where is Hillel?" Hillel was bathing. He quickly drew a cloak about himself and answered the man's call.

"I am Hillel. What is it thou desirest, my son?"

"I want to know," spoke the impudent man roughly, "why the Babylonians are round-heads?"

The man, of course, was striving to irritate Hillel. This question was not only stupid but in-

sulting. By "round-head" he meant what we today mean by "blockhead". And Hillel, you remember, was a Babylonian. But Hillel maintained his even temper and good nature.

"The Babylonians have round heads," he replied, "because their midwives are not very efficient."

The man left sulking. A little later he came rushing in again, shouting as before, "Hillel! Hillel! Where is Hillel?" Hillel answered him with quiet dignity, and asked him what he wanted.

"I want to know," the man said, "why the Tadmorians have weak eyes."

"Because they live in a sandy country," Hillel informed him.

Again the man left very much dissatisfied. A little later he came shouting for the third time, showing utter disrespect for the great teacher. And again Hillel received him with utmost courtesy.

"What is it that thou wishest to know, my son?"

"I want to know why the Africans have broad feet?"

"Because they live in marshy country," Hillel answered.

The man was chagrined. "There are many more questions I would like to put to you but I am afraid you might be angry with me."

"Oh, have no hesitation to ask me anything," replied Hillel, and he offered him a comfortable chair and encouraged him to ask the questions he had in mind.

"Art thou Hillel, the great Hillel?" the arrogant visitor asked.

"Yes, I am Hillel," the gentle master answered. "But why do you ask?"

"Because I hope that there may not be any more like you in Israel. On account of you I lost a wager and four hundred zuzim."

"It is much better," Hillel replied, "that thou shouldest lose four hundred zuzim than I should lose my temper."

Hillel was as generous as he was patient. One day he told his wife that he would bring a distinguished guest to dinner and asked her to prepare a special meal. When Hillel came with his guest, he found that his table had not been set. He waited for dinner to be announced, but no call for dinner came. He then asked his wife what the trouble was. She told him a strange story. She had prepared the dinner he had asked and the table was set when a stranger knocked at their door. He was poor and hungry, and asked for a meal. She was so sorry for him that she gave him the dinner she had prepared for her husband and his guest. Hillel's eyes beamed with joy. That was a merciful and religious thing to do, he told her, and it made him happy to know that his wife was so tender-hearted.

Many students came to study the Torah under him; from many far countries they came to Jerusalem to sit at the feet of the great Hillel, whose fame had spread throughout the world. And

Hillel taught them kindly, patiently, never losing his temper because some of them were slow to learn. And he loved them as if they were his own sons.

One day a group of students were walking down the street with him. One of them asked him where he was going. Hillel replied that he was on the way to perform one of the most important commandments God had decreed. "Would you tell us," asked one student, "what this important commandment is?" "Yes," replied Hillel. "I am on the way to the bath house!" The students were puzzled; Hillel was not in the habit of jesting that way. The wise teacher noticed it. "Tell me, my sons," he said, "have you not noticed the statues standing in the public places and the theatres? And have you not noticed how men care for them, wash them and cover them, and thus protect them from harm? If that is how we care for statues—things of bronze or iron made by human hands—how much the more, then, shall we care for the human body fashioned by God himself?"

Another time a group of students noticed Hillel hurrying down the street. They stopped him and asked whither he was hurrying. "I am on the way home to entertain an honored guest," he replied. "Do you always have guests in your home?" they asked him. "Yes," he replied. "Is not my soul my honored guest? The soul comes to us clean from the hand of God, and to God it re-

turns. It is, therefore, only proper that we should care for it tenderly and return it to God as clean as when it came to us from Him who is the Spirit of all flesh."

Hillel stood in the gate of Jerusalem one day and saw the people on the way to work. "How much will you earn today?" he asked one. "A denarius," replied one man; "two denarii", answered a second workman. "What will you do with the money?" he inquired. "We will buy the things we need," the men replied. "Would you not rather make the Torah your possession, that you may possess both this and the future world?" pleaded Hillel.

As scholar, Hillel's great contribution to Judaism was his emphasis on the spirit rather than on the narrower forms of the Law. Many disciples arose—known as "The School of Hillel"—and carried his kindlier, the more sympathetic and the more human interpretations of the Torah down the centuries. Specifically, Hillel's contributions to the scholarship of Judaism may be said to have been two:—1) He systematized the great mass of Jewish traditions;—2) he developed definite rules for the exposition of the Torah. Hillel himself laid down seven rules. Later scholars developed them to thirteen. His explanations were so clear, so practical and so lucidly stated that he was advanced to the presidency of the Sanhedrin at an early age. The office remained in his family for four generations.

As teacher of ethics, Hillel was practical as well as lofty in outlook. One of his most famous pronouncements shows a very clear understanding of the relationships between a man and his community. "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am for myself only, then what am I? And if not now, when?" It is every man's duty to provide for himself, and to develop himself. Any line of idealism that destroys the idealist is bad. But self-development should be only a means of rendering service to others. Neither self-effacement nor self-aggrandizement, but self-development as a means of being more useful to society, is the doctrine Hillel taught.

Hillel lives in the memory of Israel as the man of peace, the lover of mankind, the wise, patient, kindly teacher, the master of the Law and the father of many disciples who carried his sympathy and his understanding down the ages.

II. Johanan ben Zakkai

(10 B. C. E. — 90 C. E.)

Vespasian's army was battering at the gates of Jerusalem. For weeks this Roman general had been harassing the city. His victorious army had swept down from the north, conquering and plundering city after city, slaughtering the populations, deporting the able bodied men and women. Some were sent to Rome and sold as slaves, and thus scattered abroad; some were thrown to the lions in the arenas for the amusement of the Roman spectators. At last his army reached the walls of the Holy City and its battering engines of war were set against the ancient walls. Despair, confusion, disease and terror stalked within the walls, even as there was displayed marvelous heroism, invincible courage and defiant loyalty to God and country. But the inhabitants of Jerusalem and their leaders were divided. Some there were who urged a bitter war to the very last man within the city gates; others counselled peace with the enemy.

Among the men who urged peace was Johanan ben Zakkai. He was a highly respected scholar of the Law, who had spent his days and his years in the shadow of the Temple, expounding the Torah, and serving as one of the Sanhedrin. He was convinced that it was futile to resist the Romans any longer. By making peace with them, he thought, there was some hope of rescuing from

the invader something of the integrity of the Jewish state and the Temple. But his counsel was unheeded. Passions of war and defiance were raging in the hearts of pious men. It was a war to the very last drop of blood. The Holy City must not be polluted; the Holy of Holies must not be profaned.

But Johanan ben Zakkai was concerned more with Judaism than with the Temple. A mighty plan had been formulating itself in his mind. He would flee the doomed city, open a school devoted to the Torah, and thus save Judaism. But the enemy was at the gate. No one was permitted to leave the city. Johanan ben Zakkai thought of a novel plan. He had himself carried out of the city in a coffin. Two of his devoted students, Eliezer and Joshua, carried him in his coffin. Stopped at the gate by the Roman guard, the students insisted that their honored teacher was dead and that they were taking his body to the burial ground. To make certain that he was dead the guard attempted to spear the coffin, but upon the pleading of the students, the coffin was permitted to pass unmolested.

Thus Johanan ben Zakkai escaped from the city. He presented himself before Vespasian and asked for the privilege of opening a school at Jabneh, a small settlement on the Mediterranean coast. The petition must have sounded innocent, if not ridiculous, to the Roman soldier, who thought in terms of military strategy and force.

He granted the request. Johanan ben Zakkai settled in Jabneh, drew about himself a number of students, and thus created a center of Jewish learning, which defeated, finally, the Roman invader. That little school in Jabneh, known in Jewish tradition as the "Vineyard of Jabneh", became the new Jerusalem. It gave Judaism and Jewry a new lease on life, and so reconsecrated a people that they have survived the Roman military invader and all his successors.

On the ninth day of the month of Ab in the year 70 C. E., Titus, son of Vespasian, broke through the gates of Jerusalem, plundered the city, burned the Temple, murdered innumerable people who had resisted his army, and deported the able-bodied. That was the final devastation of the city built by David. The Jewish state was thus in ruins. With the collapse of the Temple, many thought the religion of Israel had come to an end.

A report of this devastation reached Jabneh. Johanan ben Zakkai alone of all the scholars there remained calm and forward-looking. Jerusalem had fallen, but little Jabneh remained; the Temple had fallen, but the school-house remained. A nation does not triumph by the sword; a nation is exalted by righteousness. To one of his colleagues who was weeping over the ruins of Jerusalem he said, "Be not grieved, my son, for we have an atonement as effectual as that of the Temple." "What is that?" asked the weeping

scholar. "Righteousness!" replied his master. "Hath not the prophet said, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God rather than burnt-offerings.'?"

Johanan ben Zakkai's contribution to Judaism was that he shifted the emphasis in Judaism from the Temple to the Torah, and it was this change that enabled Judaism to survive. The enemies of Israel might burn the Temple, they might tear and desecrate the Torah parchment, they might break the bodies of Jews, but the Torah itself—the revelation of God in the hearts and minds of the Jewish people—was a light they could not quench.

Jabneh, an insignificant settlement until Johanan ben Zakkai settled there, became the new Jerusalem. There he reorganized the Sanhedrin, there the scholars propounded the Law, and thus "the Vineyard of Jabneh" saved Judaism.

We know very little of the life of Johanan ben Zakkai. He was a pupil of Hillel. The great Hillel had called him "father of wisdom," "father of many generations". And the disciple lauded his master. If all the sky were parchment, he would say, all the trees of the forests were pens, the oceans were ink and all men were scribes, there would not be enough parchment, pens, ink and scribes to record all he had learned from his master.

Some of his sayings have come down to us. In *Aboth* we read that "Johanan ben Zakkai re-

ceived the tradition from Hillel and Shammai." His motto was, as reported in the same Mishnah, "If thou hast learned much Torah ascribe not any merit unto thyself, for thereunto wast thou created."

He seemed to have encouraged independent thinking on the part of his students. One day he propounded this question to them: "Which is the good way to which a man should cleave?" What should a man prize as the highest good in life? The five students to whom he put this question gave him five different answers. The reply made by his favorite student, Eleazer ben Arach, was the answer most acceptable to Johanan ben Zakkai. Eleazer ben Arach said that the highest good in life is a good heart.

"Salt thy money with charity," was one of the doctrines he emphasized, and told stories taken from every day life to prove the wisdom of being charitable. He urged peace, as we have already seen, when he counselled peace with the enemy. He pointed out that the Bible commanded that no iron be used in the construction of the altar. The reason for that, he said, was that iron is used in the making of swords, spears and arrows—that is, instruments of bloodshed and destruction. Hence iron must not be used in the making of the altar, for the altar was dedicated to God, who demands peace between man and man. He set the example in simple courtesy, kindness and industry. Tradition gives us this descrip-

tion of him: "He never spoke an idle word; he did not go four yards without reflecting on the Torah and without the phylacteries; no one ever preceded him in entering the *bet-hamidrash*; he never slept in the *bet-hamidrash*, and was always the last to leave it; no one ever found him engaged in anything but study."

He urged his pupils to be observant in all things, to watch details and be ever alert. He was travelling one day with two Jewish slaves. One of them said that there was a camel ahead. The beast was blind on one eye and there was a load on its back, including two skin bottles, one filled with oil and one with wine. There were two drivers, he said further, one of them was a Jew and one a non-Jew. But there was no such caravan in sight. Johanan ben Zakkai asked him to explain himself. And the slave offered this clever explanation: The grass is cropped on only one side of the track. Hence the camel must be blind on one eye. On the right side of the road are signs of wine and on the left are drops of oil. Hence my conclusion that there are two bottles on the camel's back, one filled with wine and one with oil. On one side of the road you see that some one has thrown away some water, in keeping, evidently, with the command to throw away water that is not needed. The other side of the road shows no such signs. Hence the conclusion that there are two drivers in the party, one a Jew and one a gentile.

Rabbi Johanan Ben Zakkai was curious to verify this bit of detective work on the part of a slave. He pressed forward and soon came on a caravan which bore out every detail in the slave's analysis.

Johanan ben Zakkai knew heartache and grief. His noble heart felt the sting of sorrow. His people had lived through a terrific ordeal, and the suffering of his people were his personal suffering. We know, also, that an eighteen-year-old son of his died, a young man who had distinguished himself in the Torah. His students tried to comfort him. One of them told him this allegory. A king once had a great treasure entrusted to him. He was very much worried lest the treasure be stolen. Eventually the time came for him to restore this treasure to its rightful owner. He did this and was very much relieved. Similarly, said this student, this son was a treasure that God had entrusted to him. He kept it carefully and guarded it loyally. At last God came to recall His treasure. Should he not rejoice that he could return this precious treasure to its Creator? The aged master heard these words and his soul was comforted.

Jewish tradition ascribes a long life to Johanan ben Zakkai. One tradition has it that he was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. That is very likely exaggerated by a loving memory. His dates are probably 10 B. C. E. to 90 C. E.

The Talmud gives us a description of his last hours. His students were gathered about him as he lay on his death bed. We read: "They said to him, 'Master, bless us!' He answered them: 'May it be His will that the fear of heaven be upon you as great as the fear of flesh and blood.' His disciples exclaimed, 'Only as great?' He answered them, 'Would that it be as great! For know ye, when a man designs to commit a transgression, he says, 'I hope that no man will see me!' "

III. Joshua ben Hananiah

(40 C. E. — 130 C. E.)

One of the students who carried Johanan ben Zakkai in a coffin out of Jerusalem was Joshua ben Hananiah. He was one of the most colorful men of his generation. Physically he was ugly—ugly enough to frighten children; mentally he was brilliant; in life and character he was humble, modest, patient, kindly and ever witty. Unfortunately we know very little of the facts of his life. But we have many stories concerning him, some told by himself and preserved in Jewish tradition, some told of him by his disciples who admired and loved him.

He was born about the year 40 C.E. and died about the year 130. His mother, so the story is told, brought him to the synagogue while he was still an infant in the cradle, so that in very infancy he might hear the words of the Torah. If his mind could not understand, his ears might grow accustomed to the words of the Law. Of her, the great Johanan ben Zakkai said, "Blessed is she who bore him." He lived and taught in Bekiim, a place near Jabneh. As a young boy he sang in the choir in the Temple at Jerusalem. By trade he was a needle maker and charcoal burner, occupations that did not enhance his beauty.

He saw the collapse of the Temple and the fall of the state. He lived through this overwhelming sorrow with his people, and was of great help to

them in reorganizing their personal lives as well as their national life on a new basis.

One of the doctrines he urged upon his people was the avoidance of extremes. People ought to be reasonable. He therefore opposed the strict interpretations of the Torah made by the school of Shammai and argued for the interpretations made by the disciples of Hillel, who, you remember, insisted on the more lenient and the more sympathetic interpretation of the Law. Short prayers, sincerely offered, were as acceptable to God as the more lengthy ones. His motto seems to have been, "Be not righteous over much", a thought taken from the book of Ecclesiastes.

It was natural for the Jewish people to sink into bitter grief and surrender to despair when their Temple and their country fell before the Roman invader. Many insisted on indulging in mourning, abstaining from everything that made for cheer. Joshua ben Hananiah argued against it. One must not indulge in excessive grief. "If people want to be happy, they must possess the qualities of temperance and the love of mankind."

Another doctrine he continually urged on his people was peace. The Jews were under the iron heel of a cruel invader. Many thought of rebellion. Joshua ben Hananiah knew how futile it would be for a disorganized, helpless people, bled white in their fight against the Romans, to rebel. Only more blood-shed and more horror would result from insurrection. He counselled peace, and

told this fable. The lion, devouring his prey, caught a bone in his throat. He sent out a call to his subjects throughout the forest asking for relief and offering a reward. The animal kingdom was afraid of its monarch, and no one dared offer its services. The crane alone volunteered to act as surgeon. He inserted his long neck into the lion's throat and extracted the bone. The operation successfully performed, he asked for his reward. But the monarch of the forest flew into a rage. How dare this long-necked fool of a bird ask for further reward? Is it not enough that his silly neck was in the lion's throat and escaped uninjured? The crane saw the point to the argument and hastily departed.

The moral of this fable was clear to the people. They should rest content in that their conqueror tolerated them and allowed them a breathing spell from their misfortunes.

Certain people, said Joshua ben Hananiah, were "enemies of the general well-being". These were the foolishly pious, the sly sinners, the women who showed an overpious bearing, and the hypocrites.

Many stories are told of him. He himself seems to have delighted in telling some of them. Walking toward Jerusalem one day, he came on a boy carrying a covered dish. "What hast thou in this dish, son?" he asked him. "Had my mother wanted its contents to be known, she would not have covered it," the boy replied. That, said

Joshua ben Hananiah, was one time when some one got the better of him in wit.

Walking down the country road one day, he came upon a fork in the road and did not know which way to take for the town he wanted to reach. A little boy happened to come along. The Rabbi asked him which was the shortest way to the town. "This one," said the boy, pointing to the right, "is the shorter and the longer, and this one," he continued, pointing to the left, "is the longer and the shorter." Then he ran away and left the Rabbi standing there puzzled. He took the road to the right, which the boy had said was the shortest and the longest, and soon came upon a great many obstacles that blocked his progress—fences, hedges, ditches. He had to retrace his steps. When he came back to the junction, he again found the little boy. "How could you misguide me?" he reprimanded the boy, "when you know that I am a stranger here?" "But I said," replied the boy, "that this road is the shorter but in the end is the longer because of the many fences, hedges, and ditches it has, whereas the other road, though the longer, is really the shorter because it is a straight, even road."

Joshua ben Hananiah delighted in telling another story on himself. He came upon a well one day where he saw a young girl drawing water. He was tired and thirsty even as was the animal on which he was riding. He asked this girl for a drink. Graciously she fetched him water and

said, in the words of Rebekah when she offered water to Eliezer, "Drink, my lord." And when he had done drinking she said, "I will draw for thy beast also." "Daughter of Israel," said the Rabbi, "may the Lord bless thee, for thou hast done even as Rebekah had done." The pretty young girl smiled and said, "but thou hast not acted as had Eliezer." Rabbi Joshua then recalled the Bible story and remembered that Eliezer rewarded Rebekah with "a golden ring half a shekel in weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold." That was another time, he said, when some one had the better of him in wit.

Joshua ben Hananiah travelled to Rome and Athens as a member of a diplomatic delegation seeking to win some relief for the suffering Jewish people. Many stories are associated with these trips.

The emperor Hadrian seemed to have enjoyed debating religious matters with him. One day Hadrian said to him, "I am better than your Moses, for Moses is dead and I am alive. And does not your own scripture say, 'a live dog is better than a dead lion'?" "But Moses, though dead these many centuries, has a stronger hold on his people to-day than you have on yours," suggested Joshua ben Hananiah. The emperor laughed. His decrees were enforced. "Could you, for example, issue a decree forbidding the kindling of lights in the homes on a certain

day?" Joshua ben Hananiah asked. That was a very simple matter, thought Hadrian. He issued the decree. On a certain day there were to be no fires in the homes. In the evening the emperor and the rabbi were on the terrace of the palace watching for signs of fires in the homes. They saw smoke issuing from chimneys. The rabbi pointed out to the emperor that even before his very eyes his laws were violated, whereas the laws of Moses were strictly observed. Moses commanded: "Ye shall kindle no fires throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath day," and the Jewish people observed it.

On another occasion Hadrian said to Joshua ben Hananiah, "This God of yours, I do not believe in Him for I can not see Him. Show me your God and I will believe in Him." The Rabbi suggested that Hadrian look up at the sun. It was a brilliant summer day and the sun was blazing. The emperor looked up and was blinded by the light. "If you can not look upon one of God's ambassadors," suggested the wise Rabbi, "how do you expect to look at God Himself?"

The Emperor Hadrian thought of an astonishingly stupid stunt—he would give a banquet to God! He told his plans to Rabbi Joshua, who, of course, tried to dissuade him. But the emperor persisted. He would give a banquet to God Himself and invite a thousand people

to the feast. "Very well," said Joshua ben Hananiah. "But may I suggest that you give this banquet on the seashore so that the sea, one of God's ambassadors, might be one of the guests?" The emperor accepted the suggestion. A tremendous banquet was prepared, a thousand people had come, the tables were loaded with costly food. But the tide set in and swept the tables into the lap of the sea.

Many stories passed from generation to generation in Israel about the picturesque, witty, learned and beloved Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah. One popular story is about a discussion between him and a princess, who could not see how so much wisdom could be lodged in so ugly a frame. "How does it happen," she said to him, "that so much glorious wisdom is enclosed in so mean a vessel?" The wise rabbi asked her in what sort of vessels her father kept his wine. "In earthen vessels," she replied. "Strange," said Rabbi Joshua, "that a king, a mighty emperor, should keep his best wine in such mean vessels! He should keep his wine in beautiful gold vessels." The princess had the wine transferred to gold vessels. Of course, the wine was spoiled. She came complaining to him. "The wine is sour and spoiled." "Then thou art convinced," replied the Rabbi, "that wine keeps best in plain and mean vessels. So it is with wisdom."

In *Aboth* we read some of his sayings. "An

evil eye, an evil inclination and hatred of his fellow creatures put a man out of the world."

The highest gift in life, he told his master, Johanan ben Zakkai, was a good friend; the worst thing was a bad friend.

Many stories told of Joshua ben Hananiah are not at all entertaining nor attractive. They tell of inner strife in the Jewish community, of rivalry among the leaders, of misunderstanding and confusion. The Jewish people lived in extremely difficult times; many grave problems confronted their leaders; many puzzling passages of the Scriptures had to be reinterpreted. It was natural, therefore, that there should have been a good deal of difference of opinion and that the various scholars and leaders should clash in their interpretations and policies.

In this confusion, Joshua ben Hananiah was a gracious, helpful person. By counselling peace, urging moderation, and by his witty, lovable personality, he exerted a calming, steadying influence. And when he died, at the age of ninety, a whole people mourned for him. "Since Rabbi Joshua died," the people said, "good counsel hath ceased in Israel."

IV. Akiba

(53 C. E.—135 C. E.)

From an illiterate shepherd to the highest ranks of scholarship of his day, from a destitute youth to the leadership of his people, from penury to wealth, from the class room to rebellion and a martyr's death—all against the background of love and romance—is the story of Akiba ben Joseph.

He was born about the year 53, when the iron heel of Rome was on the neck of the Jewish people. As a young man we see him earning his daily bread by tending the flocks of a wealthy man in (or near) Jerusalem. Perhaps the long days and the silent nights under the open sky made him dream of a career in the world. But he was not always yearning for scholarship. Tradition tells us that there was a time in the life of Akiba when he had nothing but scorn for the scholar and the school man. But, slowly, came a change of heart.

He fell in love with the daughter of a wealthy man. Her name was Rachel. Her father was stubbornly against the marriage, but love was strong in the hearts of the pair. They were married, and disinherited. Stark poverty stared them in the face—no decent lodging place, no respectable clothes for their backs, and no wholesome food for their hungry stomachs. Rabbinic tradition describes the newly-weds

living in a dilapidated shack, sleeping on a bundle of straw, and sharing that straw with one who was even poorer than themselves.

With marriage came a stronger sense of responsibility. He must find his work in the world. He would study and prepare himself for a life of scholarship. Rachel urged him to leave her and devote all his time to study in the schools of the masters of the Law. But he was a grown man, and he would have to begin where young children do. He was debating the wisdom of beginning school at a mature age, one day as he was out in the fields, when he found himself observing drops of water trickling down a rock, striking a rock below and hollowing it. "If a drop of water by persistence can make so deep a cut in a rock, why can not the words of God, by persistent study, make an impression on my unlettered mind?" he mused.

But he was mercilessly poor. No fees were required by the academies. But one had to live. One did need a little money. To help him in his need, Rachel, so runs the romance, sold her beautiful hair, the only ornament she had, bravely choosing for herself years of loneliness and poverty. She sent her husband to sit at the feet of the wise men in Israel. For twelve years he remained in the academies, earning for himself the highest praise of his masters, Eliezer ben Hyrcanus and Joshua ben Hananiah. Returning home, after these many years, he

overheard his wife tell a neighbor, just as he was entering the house, that if she had her way, he would remain in the academies for another stretch of twelve years. Akiba quietly withdrew, returned to the schools and remained for another period of twelve years. When he finally returned home, accompanied by a large number of students and admirers, the young bride he had left behind was a tired, aged woman, her face wrinkled with much worry, but her eyes beaming with an undying love.

Rachel's father came to see the distinguished scholar (not knowing that he was his son-in-law). He had come to regret his harsh treatment of his daughter, and wanted the famous scholar's advice as to how he might break the vow he had taken years before in disinheriting her. "Tell me," said Akiba, "why did you take this harsh vow? Why were you against the marriage and why did you drive your daughter out of your home?" "He was an ignorant fellow," replied his father-in-law. "He was unable to read a word of the Torah." Akiba made himself known to his visitor and a great joy came into the hearts of both men.

A prayer Akiba uttered while still a student shows the passion of his life: "I thank Thee, O Lord my God, that Thou hast placed me among the studious and not among the idlers." After spending many years as a student under the distinguished teachers of his time, he opened

a school at Bene Berak, near Jaffa. A large and distinguished body of students came to him, and through them and their disciples, he helped shape the life and thought of the Jewish people for many ages.

A great many stories and legends are told of Akiba. Many of them are founded in fact; some of them show the profound admiration in which he was held by his people. Their fond imagination wove garlands of praise and placed them on his honored head. All these stories show something of Akiba's personality, something of his life and doctrines.

One story often told of Akiba is that he was on a journey at one time. He took with him a donkey to carry his meager belongings, a lamp to light the way by night and to enable him to do a bit of studying, and a cock to wake him at the break of day for prayer and study. He came to a village as night was falling and sought shelter, but though he found human beings there, he found no kindness and no hospitality. No one would lodge him for the night. "Whatever God does, He does for the best," Akiba said to himself, repeating his favorite saying, and continued on his journey. He stopped for the night under the open sky. He would read a page of the Law before retiring, as was his habit, but a violent wind arose and extinguished his lamp. "Whatever God does, He does for the best," mused Akiba and stretched himself out on the

bare ground for the night. But a wild beast soon snatched his cock and carried it off. Now there was no one to wake him for prayer and study! But "Whatever God does, He does for the best," repeated Akiba and tried to fall asleep. He had hardly closed his eyes when a lion attacked his donkey and carried it off. "My lamp is out, my cock is killed and my poor donkey is gone! But whatever God does, He does for the best!" Early the next morning he met three frightened men who told him that the whole community was murdered. A band of robbers invaded it that night and killed every man, woman, and child. "How mysterious are Thy ways, O God!" said Akiba. "Had I found shelter in that settlement last night, I would have been murdered; had my lamp not gone out, the robbers would have seen me and perhaps killed me; had my cock not been killed it would have crowed, and had not my donkey been carried off, it would have brayed and thus aroused the attention of the robbers. Indeed, whatever God does, He does for the best!"

This and many other stories testify to Akiba's strong belief that human life is under the guardianship of a just, a merciful God, and that it is man's duty on earth so to order his life as to make his life and work acceptable to God. God insists on this for He rules the world in justice. "Everything is given on pledge," Akiba says in *Aboth;* "the shop is open; and the dealer gives credit; and the ledger lies open; and the hand

writes; and whosoever wishes to borrow may come and borrow; but the collectors regularly make their rounds, and exact payment from man whether he be content or not." (See Chapter III., Mishnahs XVII. — XX.). "God rules the world in mercy," he said further, "but according to the preponderance of good or bad in human acts." The greatest teaching in the Bible, according to Akiba, is the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

A gardner admonished Akiba one day for recommending some medicine to a sick man. If it is God's wish that this man be sick, we have no right to thwart God's plans by helping him get well, the man argued. Akiba could not subscribe to such logic. "What have you in your hands?" Akiba asked him. "Tools! I am a gardener and these are my implements." "But why do you interfere with God's plans?" Akiba turned his own argument upon the man. "But if I do not break up the earth, till it, water it, my garden will not flourish," the man argued. "Exactly," replied Akiba, making his point. "Man is a co-worker with God; he must do his share if the earth is to yield her harvest, and he must do his share by his own body, if he is to be well and happy."

Akiba had many discussions with the Roman governor, Tineius Rufus. Rufus asked him one day, "If your God is concerned with the welfare of man, why did not God make man perfect?" Akiba's reply was that God wants man

to perfect himself. "If God loves the poor," the governor asked further, "then why does He not support them?" "For the reason," replied the rabbi, "that God wants man to have the opportunity of doing good to his fellows."

"Who made the world?" some one asked Akiba one day. "God," he replied. "Prove it," the man challenged the rabbi. "Who made your coat?" Akiba asked in reply. "A tailor," replied the skeptic. "Prove it," Akiba challenged him. "It stands to reason that a tailor made it." Akiba thus made his point: just as the coat testifies to a tailor, or the house to a builder, so does the world testify to a Creator.

Akiba was a modest man and urged modesty on his students. They should not push themselves to the seats of the mighty, they should not be proud because perhaps they know a little more than some one else. "He who is conceited because of his knowledge is like a carcass lying on the wayside. The traveler turns his head away in disgust."

Akiba's contributions to Judaism may be said to be two: First, he helped edit the Bible and arrange it in the form in which we have it today. Many editions of the Bible had been made, but the entire Bible had not yet been completed. There were many books to be considered from the standpoint of their places in the Bible. Some scholars argued, for example, that the Song of Songs should not be included in the Bible and some argued for it; some said that the book

of Ecclesiastes should not be incorporated and some said that it should be. Some scholars wanted to include certain books that are now in the Apocrypha. Akiba was one of the men who had to decide on these books and thus help complete the Bible. His second contribution was that he helped collect and classify according to subject matter the great mass of rabbinic traditions. The rabbis and scholars and scribes had collected and produced a great body of laws, opinions, stories, decisions and traditions. Attempts had been made to organize them into one system, but no one edition had been accepted by the scholars. Akiba helped collect and arrange this material. His edition of the laws was later perfected by Judah ha-Nasi into our Mishnah. Judah ha-Nasi, one of the greatest editors of rabbinic law we have ever had, called Akiba a "sealed treasure" and compared him to a man who goes to market and puts into his basket whatever he finds of interest. Later, on his return home, he takes the various articles out of his basket and puts them in their proper places. Similarly, Akiba went through the very large field of Jewish traditions, picked up everything he came upon and later organized the material into a system. The people spoke of him as "the second Ezra," because, like Ezra many centuries before, he edited the Bible and systematized Jewish traditions.

Akiba was an ardent patriot. He yearned

for the time when his beloved Jerusalem would be freed of the Roman tyrant and once again rejoice in her own strength and independence. He believed that a day would quickly come when the deliverer would arrive and restore Jewish independence on the soil of Palestine. And so when Bar Cokba raised the banner of rebellion against Rome in the year 132, Akiba rallied to his support. He was the star that had sprung out of Jacob, even as the Bible had predicted, said Akiba. But that rebellion ended in blood and tears for the Jewish people. Some half a million Jews were killed, fifty fortresses were razed, and some thousand villages were devastated. Thousands of Jews were sold as slaves and carried off to every part of the earth. The slave markets were so glutted with them that a Jewish slave cost less than a horse.

Akiba was arrested and jailed for participating in the rebellion. But he remained true and brave to the very end. He urged upon the people to follow the example of their leaders and remain true to the Torah. As long as the Torah was alive in the hearts and minds of the people, no one—not even the mightiest tyrant—could destroy them. He told them the fable of the Fish and the Fox. The fish of the sea were greatly agitated. "Why are you so worried and excited?" the scheming fox asked them. "Men are spreading their nets and are trying to catch us," they replied. "Yonder is a rock," the fox advised them. "Go there where the men can't

get after you, and I shall join you and live with you." But the fish were not so stupid as to accept this advice. "Water is our natural element," they said, "and we can not hope to live out of it."

The point of this fable was clear to the people. Torah is the natural element for the Jews, and as soon as the Jewish people leave it, they perish as a people.

The Roman tyrants too knew that. They passed laws prohibiting any one from studying the Torah. Teaching it was a crime punishable by death. But many of the Jewish sages risked, and lost, their lives rather than submit to this decree. Among these was Akiba.

As they were leading him to his death he recited the *Shema,* for it was time for morning prayer. "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, The Lord is one," he prayed calmly. It was a horrible death to which he was subjected. The skin was pulled off his body with iron, before the merciful flames consumed him, but he remained calm and controlled. The executioner was amazed. "Are you a sorcerer that you can absorb this pain without flinching?" he asked in astonishment. "I am not a sorcerer," the martyr replied, "but I rejoice that now I may love the Lord my God with all my heart, with all my soul and with all my might." With these words, he drew his last breath and joined the heroic band of Jewish martyrs and sages of all times.

V. Judah ha-Nasi

(135 C. E.—220 C. E.)

On the day when Akiba was put to death by the Roman tyrant, a child was born that was to bring comfort, light and guidance to the Jewish people. He was famous, both in his life time and in the following generations, as Judah ha-Nasi—Judah the Prince. "Before one sun set, another arose," said the Jewish sages.

We know very little of the facts of his life. The place of his birth is unknown. As a young man he studied in Usha, where the famous Rabbi Meir had taught some years before. His teachers were for the most part the pupils of Akiba, and thus the chain of tradition linked the masters of Israel. In middle age he moved to She'arim, probably because of his poor health, She'arim offering a more congenial climate. There he carried on as director of the academy, drawing about himself a large number of students, and there he served as judge. People came to him for decisions from all parts of the Jewish world. The last seventeen years of his life were spent at Sepphoris.

The esteem in which he was held by the people may be seen in the titles that were given him. He was called Nasi, that is, Prince. On his mother's side he was a descendant of King David, but that was not the only reason for his title of Prince. He was recognized by his own

people and also by the Roman authorities as the chief and spokesman of the Jews. Another title applied to him was simply Rabbi. He was called, also, "the Holy," because of the nobility of his life. Sometimes the titles were combined and we hear him called, "Rabbenu ha-Kodesh" —our Holy Master. "If the Messiah were on earth, he would be like Judah," said the people.

He was a man of great wealth. "Judah's cattle-stalls," it was said, "are worth more than the treasure chambers of the king of Persia." But neither wealth, fame, nor the love and admiration of a people affected his modesty. He used his wealth in encouraging the study of the Torah and helping the needy. He supported a large number of students. At one time, when famine stalked the land, he threw open the gates of his granary to the hungry masses. His kindness extended to animals. "The Lord is good to *all*," he would say, quoting the Psalmist; "His tender mercies are over *all* His works." And He made beast as well as man.

Some of his sayings reflect his beautiful nobility. "I am ready to do anything reasonable that any man may ask me to do," he would say. On his deathbed, turning to his disciples, he said, "I have not enjoyed more of the luxuries of this world than these ten fingers of mine could have brought me by daily labor with them." In *Aboth* we read his more popular saying: "Which is the right course that a man

should choose for himself? That which he feels to be honorable to himself, and which also brings him honor from mankind. Be careful of a light precept as of a grave one, for thou knowest not the grant of reward for each precept. Reckon the loss incurred by the fulfillment of a precept against the reward secured by its observance, and the gain gotten by a transgression against the loss it involves. Reflect upon three things and thou wilt not come within the power of sin: know what is above thee—a seeing eye, a hearing ear, and all thy deeds written in a book." (see Chapter II., Mishnah I.)

Thus he answers three questions: What is the best course for a man to follow through life? How shall we react to what appears to be only a small duty? What is the most effective preventive of sin? This passage seems to have been his motto. A prayer uttered by him has been preserved by the Synagogue: "May it be Thy will, my God and God of my fathers, to protect me against the impudent and against impudence, from bad men and bad companions, from severe sentence and severe plaintiffs, whether a son of the covenant or no."

Rabbi urged the doctrine of peace, as did all the Jewish sages. He entertained his students one day, and served them tongue, some very soft and tender, some hard. The tender tongue was consumed and the hard tongue was left. Rabbi then pointed out his moral: The accept-

able tongue is the tender one. "May your tongue be soft in your mutual intercourse," he told them. Being a man of practical affairs as well as a scholar, he urged self-knowledge and circumspection. "Let thy secret be known only to thyself; and do not tell thy neighbor anything which thou perceivest may not fitly be listened to."

Rabbi knew sorrow. He was left a widower in middle age. A tender romance colored his life. He courted the widow of the distinguished Rabbi Eleazar. He had fame, wealth, the love of a people, much prestige, and learning. But the poor widow cherished tenderly the memory of her love, and all the wealth and prestige and honor Rabbi had to offer her could not win her. They respected and honored each other to their dying days.

Rabbi enjoyed the confidence of the Roman emperor. Secretly they would meet and discourse on many subjects. Tradition tells us that the Roman emperor gave him much gold to use in his benefactions to the Jewish poor.

Once the Roman asked him how God could possibly punish the soul in the hereafter for the sins committed while on earth, seeing that it was allied with the body. The body committed the sin even more than did the soul. Rabbi replied by telling this famous story:

Once upon a time a king placed two men in his orchard to guard it. One was lame and the

other was blind. They were tempted by the luscious fruit, but they were helpless and could not eat of it. They thought of a plan. The blind man would carry the lame one on his shoulders, and thus one would supply the feet and the other the eyes. Thus organized, they helped themselves to the fruit. The king discovered that some of his fruit was stolen and charged the two men with the theft. The two pleaded not guilty on the ground of their physical handicaps. Thereupon the king placed the lame man on the shoulders of the blind one and punished them as if they were one. Thus Rabbi replied to the Roman emperor.

Rabbi's chief contribution to Judaism is that he edited the Mishnah, placing it in the form in which we have it to-day. Next to the Bible, Rabbi's edition of the Mishnah became the guiding authority in Jewish life. Both the Babylonian and the Palestinian versions of the Talmud are based on his Mishnah. So effective was his work that with Rabbi, one epoch in Judaism ends and another begins.

פרקי אבות.

1 תִּשְׂיחָךְ. בְּהִתְהַלֶּכְךָ תַּנְחֶה אֹתָךְ בָּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה:
2 בְּשָׁכְבְּךָ תִּשְׁמוֹר עָלֶיךָ בַּקֶּבֶר. וַהֲקִיצוֹתָ הִיא
3 תִּשְׂיחָךְ לָעוֹלָם הַבָּא: וְאוֹמֵר לִי הַכֶּסֶף וְלִי הַזָּהָב
4 נְאֻם יְיָ צְבָאוֹת: כָּל מַה שֶּׁבָּרָא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא
5 בְּעוֹלָמוֹ לֹא בְרָאוֹ אֶלָּא לְכְבוֹדוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר כֹּל הַנִּקְרָא
6 בִשְׁמִי וְלִכְבוֹדִי בְּרָאתִיו יְצַרְתִּיו אַף עֲשִׂיתִיו:
7 וְאוֹמֵר יְיָ יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:
8 רַבִּי חֲנַנְיָא בֶּן עֲקַשְׁיָא אוֹמֵר רָצָה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא לְזַכּוֹת
9 אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפִיכָךְ הִרְבָּה לָהֶם תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר יְיָ חָפֵץ
10 לְמַעַן צִדְקוֹ יַגְדִּיל תּוֹרָה וְיַאְדִּיר:

1 מַעֲשֶׂיךָ יְיָ כֻּלָּם בְּחָכְמָה עָשִׂיתָ מָלְאָה הָאָרֶץ קִנְיָנֶךָ׃
2 אַבְרָהָם מִנַּיִן דִּכְתִיב וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ וַיֹּאמַר בָּרוּךְ אַבְרָם
3 לְאֵל עֶלְיוֹן קוֹנֵה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ : יִשְׂרָאֵל מִנַּיִן דִּכְתִיב
4 עַד יַעֲבֹר עַמְּךָ יְיָ עַד יַעֲבֹר עַם זוּ קָנִיתָ : וְאוֹמֵר
5 לִקְדוֹשִׁים אֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ הֵמָּה וְאַדִּירֵי כָּל חֶפְצִי בָם׃
6 בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ מִנַּיִן דִּכְתִיב מָכוֹן לְשִׁבְתְּךָ פָּעַלְתָּ יְיָ
7 מִקְדָּשׁ אֲדֹנָי כּוֹנְנוּ יָדֶיךָ : וְאוֹמֵר וַיְבִיאֵם אֶל גְּבוּל
8 קָדְשׁוֹ הַר זֶה קָנְתָה יְמִינוֹ : אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹסֵי בֶּן קִסְמָא
9 פַּעַם אַחַת הָיִיתִי מְהַלֵּךְ בַּדֶּרֶךְ וּפָגַע בִּי אָדָם אֶחָד
10 וְנָתַן לִי שָׁלוֹם וְהֶחֱזַרְתִּי לוֹ שָׁלוֹם אָמַר לִי רַבִּי
11 מֵאֵיזֶה מָקוֹם אַתָּה אָמַרְתִּי לוֹ מֵעִיר גְּדוֹלָה שֶׁל
12 חֲכָמִים וְשֶׁל סוֹפְרִים אָנִי . אָמַר לִי רַבִּי רְצוֹנְךָ
13 שֶׁתָּדוּר עִמָּנוּ בִּמְקוֹמֵנוּ וַאֲנִי אֶתֵּן לְךָ אֶלֶף אֲלָפִים
14 דִּנְרֵי זָהָב וַאֲבָנִים טוֹבוֹת וּמַרְגָּלִיוֹת . אָמַרְתִּי לוֹ אִם
15 אַתָּה נוֹתֵן לִי כָּל כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב וַאֲבָנִים טוֹבוֹת וּמַרְגָּלִיוֹת
16 שֶׁבָּעוֹלָם אֵינִי דָר אֶלָּא בִּמְקוֹם תּוֹרָה וְכֵן כָּתוּב
17 בְּסֵפֶר תְּהִלִּים עַל יְדֵי דָּוִד מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל טוֹב לִי
18 תוֹרַת פִּיךָ מֵאַלְפֵי זָהָב וָכָסֶף : וְלֹא עוֹד אֶלָּא
19 שֶׁבְּשָׁעַת פְּטִירָתוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם אֵין מְלַוִּין לוֹ לָאָדָם לֹא
20 כֶּסֶף וְלֹא זָהָב וְלֹא אֲבָנִים טוֹבוֹת וּמַרְגָּלִיוֹת אֶלָּא
21 תוֹרָה וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים בִּלְבָד. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בְּהִתְהַלֶּכְךָ
22 תַּנְחֶה אֹתָךְ בְּשָׁכְבְּךָ תִּשְׁמֹר עָלֶיךָ וַהֲקִיצוֹתָ הִיא

1 וְאוֹמֵר תִּתֵּן לְרָאשֵׁךְ לְוָיַת חֵן עֲטֶרֶת תִּפְאֶרֶת
2 תְּמַגְּנֶךָּ: וְאוֹמֵר כִּי בִי יִרְבּוּ יָמֶיךָ וְיוֹסִיפוּ לְךָ שְׁנוֹת
3 חַיִּים: וְאוֹמֵר אֹרֶךְ יָמִים בִּימִינָהּ בִּשְׂמֹאולָהּ עֹשֶׁר
4 וְכָבוֹד: וְאוֹמֵר כִּי אֹרֶךְ יָמִים וּשְׁנוֹת חַיִּים וְשָׁלוֹם
5 יוֹסִיפוּ לָךְ: וְאוֹמֵר דְּרָכֶיהָ דַרְכֵי נֹעַם וְכָל נְתִיבוֹתֶיהָ
6 שָׁלוֹם: רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן יְהוּדָה מִשּׁוּם רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן
7 בֶּן יוֹחָאִי אוֹמֵר הַנּוֹי וְהַכֹּחַ וְהָעֹשֶׁר וְהַכָּבוֹד וְהַחָכְמָה
8 וְהַזְּקָנָה וְהַשֵּׂיבָה וְהַבָּנִים נָאֶה לַצַּדִּיקִים וְנָאֶה לָעוֹלָם
9 שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר עֲטֶרֶת תִּפְאֶרֶת שֵׂיבָה בְּדֶרֶךְ צְדָקָה תִּמָּצֵא:
10 וְאוֹמֵר עֲטֶרֶת זְקֵנִים בְּנֵי בָנִים וְתִפְאֶרֶת בָּנִים אֲבוֹתָם:
11 וְאוֹמֵר תִּפְאֶרֶת בַּחוּרִים כֹּחָם וַהֲדַר זְקֵנִים שֵׂיבָה:
12 וְאוֹמֵר וְהָפְרָה הַלְּבָנָה וּבוֹשָׁה הַחַמָּה כִּי מָלַךְ יְיָ
13 צְבָאוֹת בְּהַר צִיּוֹן וּבִירוּשָׁלַיִם וְנֶגֶד זְקֵנָיו כָּבוֹד: רַבִּי
14 שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן מְנַסְיָא אוֹמֵר אֵלּוּ שֶׁבַע מִדּוֹת שֶׁמָּנוּ
15 חֲכָמִים לַצַּדִּיקִים כֻּלָּם נִתְקַיְּמוּ בְּרַבִּי וּבְבָנָיו: חֲמִשָּׁה
16 קִנְיָנִים קָנָה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא בְּעוֹלָמוֹ וְאֵלּוּ הֵן.
17 תּוֹרָה קִנְיָן אֶחָד. שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ קִנְיָן אֶחָד. אַבְרָהָם
18 קִנְיָן אֶחָד. יִשְׂרָאֵל קִנְיָן אֶחָד. בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ קִנְיָן
19 אֶחָד. תּוֹרָה מִנַּיִן דִּכְתִיב יְיָ קָנָנִי רֵאשִׁית דַּרְכּוֹ קֶדֶם
20 מִפְעָלָיו מֵאָז: שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ מִנַּיִן דִּכְתִיב כֹּה אָמַר
21 יְיָ הַשָּׁמַיִם כִּסְאִי וְהָאָרֶץ הֲדֹם רַגְלָי אֵי זֶה בַיִת אֲשֶׁר
22 תִּבְנוּ לִי וְאֵי זֶה מָקוֹם מְנוּחָתִי: וְאוֹמֵר מָה רַבּוּ

1 בְּמַעוֹט תַּעֲנוּג בְּמַעוֹט שֵׁנָה בְּמַעוֹט שִׂיחָה בְּמַעוֹט
2 שְׂחוֹק בְּאֹרֶךְ אַפַּיִם בְּלֵב טוֹב בֶּאֱמוּנַת חֲכָמִים
3 בְּקַבָּלַת הַיִּסּוּרִין הַמַּכִּיר אֶת מְקוֹמוֹ וְהַשָּׂמֵחַ בְּחֶלְקוֹ
4 וְהָעוֹשֶׂה סְיָג לִדְבָרָיו וְאֵינוֹ מַחֲזִיק טוֹבָה לְעַצְמוֹ
5 אָהוּב אוֹהֵב אֶת הַמָּקוֹם אוֹהֵב אֶת הַבְּרִיוֹת אוֹהֵב
6 אֶת הַצְּדָקוֹת אוֹהֵב אֶת הַמֵּישָׁרִים אוֹהֵב אֶת
7 הַתּוֹכָחוֹת וּמִתְרַחֵק מִן הַכָּבוֹד וְלֹא מֵגִיס לִבּוֹ
8 בְּתַלְמוּדוֹ וְאֵינוֹ שָׂמֵחַ בְּהוֹרָאָה נוֹשֵׂא בְעוֹל עִם
9 חֲבֵרוֹ וּמַכְרִיעוֹ לְכַף זְכוּת וּמַעֲמִידוֹ עַל הָאֱמֶת
10 וּמַעֲמִידוֹ עַל הַשָּׁלוֹם וּמִתְיַשֵּׁב לִבּוֹ בְּתַלְמוּדוֹ שׁוֹאֵל
11 וּמֵשִׁיב שׁוֹמֵעַ וּמוֹסִיף הַלּוֹמֵד עַל מְנָת לְלַמֵּד וְהַלּוֹמֵד
12 עַל מְנָת לַעֲשׂוֹת הַמַּחְכִּים אֶת רַבּוֹ וְהַמְכַוֵּן אֶת
13 שְׁמוּעָתוֹ וְהָאוֹמֵר דָּבָר בְּשֵׁם אוֹמְרוֹ הָא לָמַדְתָּ כָּל
14 הָאוֹמֵר דָּבָר בְּשֵׁם אוֹמְרוֹ מֵבִיא גְּאֻלָּה לָעוֹלָם שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר
15 וַתֹּאמֶר אֶסְתֵּר לַמֶּלֶךְ בְּשֵׁם מָרְדְּכָי׃ ׀ גְּדוֹלָה תוֹרָה
16 שֶׁהִיא נוֹתֶנֶת חַיִּים לְעֹשֶׂיהָ בָּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וּבָעוֹלָם
17 הַבָּא שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר כִּי חַיִּים הֵם לְמוֹצְאֵיהֶם וּלְכָל בְּשָׂרוֹ
18 מַרְפֵּא׃ וְאוֹמֵר רְפָאוֹת תְּהִי לְשָׁרֶךָ וְשִׁקּוּי לְעַצְמוֹתֶיךָ׃
19 וְאוֹמֵר עֵץ חַיִּים הִיא לַמַּחֲזִיקִים בָּהּ וְתֹמְכֶיהָ מְאֻשָּׁר׃
20 וְאוֹמֵר כִּי לְוָיַת חֵן הֵם לְרֹאשֶׁךָ וַעֲנָקִים לְגַרְגְּרֹתֶיךָ׃

1 אוֹ אֲפִילוּ אוֹת אֶחָת עַל אַחַת כַּמָּה וְכַמָּה שֶׁצָּרִיךְ
2 לְנָהֵג בּוֹ כָּבוֹד וְאֵין כָּבוֹד אֶלָּא תּוֹרָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר כָּבוֹד
3 חֲכָמִים יְנַחֲלוּ וּתְמִימִים יִנְחֲלוּ טוֹב וְאֵין טוֹב אֶלָּא
4 תּוֹרָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר כִּי לֶקַח טוֹב נָתַתִּי לָכֶם תּוֹרָתִי אַל
5 תַּעֲזֹבוּ: ד כַּף הָיא דַרְכָּה שֶׁל תּוֹרָה כַּף בַּמֶּלַח
6 תֹּאכֵל וּמַיִם בַּמְּשׂוּרָה תִּשְׁתֶּה וְעַל הָאָרֶץ תִּישָׁן
7 וְחַיֵּי צַעַר תִּחְיֶה וּבַתּוֹרָה אַתָּה עָמֵל אִם אַתָּה
8 עֹשֶׂה כֵּן אַשְׁרֶיךָ וְטוֹב לָךְ אַשְׁרֶיךָ בָּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְטוֹב
9 לָךְ לָעוֹלָם הַבָּא: ה אַל תְּבַקֵּשׁ גְּדֻלָּה לְעַצְמְךָ וְאַל
10 תַּחְמוֹד כָּבוֹד יוֹתֵר מִלִּמּוּדֶךָ עֲשֵׂה וְאַל תִּתְאַוֶּה
11 לְשֻׁלְחָנָם שֶׁל שָׂרִים שֶׁשֻּׁלְחָנְךָ גָּדוֹל מִשֻּׁלְחָנָם
12 וְכִתְרְךָ גָּדוֹל מִכִּתְרָם וְנֶאֱמָן הוּא בַּעַל מְלַאכְתְּךָ
13 שֶׁיְּשַׁלֵּם לְךָ שְׂכַר פְּעֻלָּתֶךָ: ו גְּדוֹלָה תוֹרָה יוֹתֵר מִן
14 הַכְּהֻנָּה וּמִן הַמַּלְכוּת. שֶׁהַמַּלְכוּת נִקְנֵית בִּשְׁלֹשִׁים
15 מַעֲלוֹת וְהַכְּהוּנָּה נִקְנֵית בְּעֶשְׂרִים וְאַרְבָּעָה וְהַתּוֹרָה
16 נִקְנֵית בְּאַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁמוֹנָה דְבָרִים. וְאֵלּוּ הֵן. בְּתַלְמוּד
17 בְּשִׁמְיַעַת הָאֹזֶן בַּעֲרִיכַת שְׂפָתַיִם בְּבִינַת הַלֵּב בְּאֵימָה
18 בְּיִרְאָה בַּעֲנָוָה בְּשִׂמְחָה בְּטָהֳרָה בְּשִׁמּוּשׁ חֲכָמִים
19 בְּדִקְדּוּק חֲבֵרִים בְּפִלְפּוּל תַּלְמִידִים ׀ בְּיִשּׁוּב
20 בְּמִקְרָא בְּמִשְׁנָה בְּמִעוּט סְחוֹרָה בְּמִעוּט דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ

1 שֶׁאֵינוֹ פּוֹסֵק וְהוֹוֶה צָנוּעַ וְאֶרֶךְ רוּחַ וּמוֹחֵל עַל עֶלְבּוֹנוֹ
2 וּמְגַדַּלְתּוֹ וּמְרוֹמַמְתּוֹ עַל כָּל הַמַּעֲשִׂים: ג אָמַר רַבִּי
3 יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי בְּכָל יוֹם וָיוֹם בַּת קוֹל יוֹצֵאת מֵהַר
4 חוֹרֵב וּמַכְרֶזֶת וְאוֹמֶרֶת אוֹי לָהֶם לַבְּרִיּוֹת מֵעֶלְבּוֹנָהּ
5 שֶׁל תּוֹרָה שֶׁכָּל מִי שֶׁאֵינוֹ עוֹסֵק בַּתּוֹרָה נִקְרָא נָזוּף
6 שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר נֶזֶם זָהָב בְּאַף חֲזִיר אִשָּׁה יָפָה וְסָרַת טָעַם.
7 וְאוֹמֵר וְהַלֻּחוֹת מַעֲשֵׂה אֱלֹהִים הֵמָּה וְהַמִּכְתָּב מִכְתַּב
8 אֱלֹהִים הוּא חָרוּת עַל הַלֻּחוֹת. אַל תִּקְרָא חָרוּת
9 אֶלָּא חֵרוּת שֶׁאֵין לְךָ בֶּן חוֹרִין אֶלָּא מִי שֶׁעוֹסֵק
10 בְּתַלְמוּד תּוֹרָה וְכָל מִי שֶׁעוֹסֵק בְּתַלְמוּד תּוֹרָה הֲרֵי זֶה
11 מִתְעַלֶּה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וּמִמַּתָּנָה נַחֲלִיאֵל וּמִנַּחֲלִיאֵל בָּמוֹת:
12 ג הַלּוֹמֵד מֵחֲבֵרוֹ פֶּרֶק אֶחָד אוֹ הֲלָכָה אַחַת אוֹ
13 פָּסוּק אֶחָד אוֹ דִבּוּר אֶחָד אוֹ אֲפִילוּ אוֹת אַחַת צָרִיךְ
14 לִנְהֹג בּוֹ כָּבוֹד שֶׁכֵּן מָצִינוּ בְּדָוִד מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁלֹּא
15 לָמַד מֵאֲחִיתוֹפֶל אֶלָּא שְׁנֵי דְבָרִים בִּלְבָד קְרָאוֹ רַבּוֹ
16 אַלּוּפוֹ וּמְיֻדָּעוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְאַתָּה אֱנוֹשׁ כְּעֶרְכִּי אַלּוּפִי
17 וּמְיֻדָּעִי. וַהֲלֹא דְבָרִים קַל וָחֹמֶר וּמַה דָּוִד מֶלֶךְ
18 יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁלֹּא לָמַד מֵאֲחִיתוֹפֶל אֶלָּא שְׁנֵי דְבָרִים
19 בִּלְבָד קְרָאוֹ רַבּוֹ אַלּוּפוֹ וּמְיֻדָּעוֹ הַלּוֹמֵד מֵחֲבֵרוֹ פֶּרֶק
20 אֶחָד אוֹ הֲלָכָה אַחַת אוֹ פָּסוּק אֶחָד אוֹ דִבּוּר אֶחָד

1 וְסִיב וּבְלֵה בָהּ וּמִנָּהּ לָא תָזוּעַ שֵׁאֵין לְךָ מִדָּה טוֹבָה
2 הַיְמֶנָּה: בֶּן הֵא הֵא אוֹמֵר לְפוּם צַעֲרָה אַגְרָא:
3 רַבִּי חֲנַנְיָא בֶּן עֲקַשְׁיָא אוֹמֵר רָצָה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא לְזַכּוֹת
4 אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפִיכָךְ הִרְבָּה לָהֶם תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר יְיָ חָפֵץ
5 לְמַעַן צִדְקוֹ יַגְדִּיל תּוֹרָה וְיַאְדִּיר׃

פרק ששי

6 כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ לָהֶם חֵלֶק לָעוֹלָם הַבָּא. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר
7 וְעַמֵּךְ כֻּלָּם צַדִּיקִים לְעוֹלָם יִירְשׁוּ אֶרֶץ נֵצֶר
8 מַטָּעַי מַעֲשֵׂה יָדַי לְהִתְפָּאֵר׃
9 שָׁנוּ חֲכָמִים בְּלָשׁוֹן הַמִּשְׁנָה בָּרוּךְ שֶׁבָּחַר בָּהֶם
10 וּבְמִשְׁנָתָם: א רַבִּי מֵאִיר אוֹמֵר כָּל הָעוֹסֵק בַּתּוֹרָה
11 לִשְׁמָהּ זוֹכֶה לִדְבָרִים הַרְבֵּה וְלֹא עוֹד אֶלָּא שֶׁכָּל
12 הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ כְּדַאי הוּא לוֹ נִקְרָא רֵעַ אָהוּב אוֹהֵב
13 אֶת הַמָּקוֹם אוֹהֵב אֶת הַבְּרִיּוֹת מְשַׂמֵּחַ אֶת הַמָּקוֹם
14 מְשַׂמֵּחַ אֶת הַבְּרִיּוֹת וּמַלְבַּשְׁתּוֹ עֲנָוָה וְיִרְאָה וּמַכְשַׁרְתּוֹ
15 לִהְיוֹת צַדִּיק חָסִיד יָשָׁר וְנֶאֱמָן וּמְרַחַקְתּוֹ מִן הַחֵטְא
16 וּמְקָרַבְתּוֹ לִידֵי זְכוּת וְנֶהֱנִין מִמֶּנּוּ עֵצָה וְתוּשִׁיָּה
17 בִּינָה וּגְבוּרָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר לִי עֵצָה וְתוּשִׁיָּה אֲנִי בִינָה
18 לִי גְבוּרָה וְנוֹתֶנֶת לוֹ מַלְכוּת וּמֶמְשָׁלָה וְחִקּוּר דִּין
19 וּמְגַלִּין לוֹ רָזֵי תוֹרָה וְנַעֲשֶׂה כְּמַעְיָן הַמִּתְגַּבֵּר וּכְנָהָר

1 אַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ לְתַלְמִידָיו שֶׁל בִּלְעָם הָרָשָׁע.
2 תַּלְמִידָיו שֶׁל אַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ אוֹכְלִין בָּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה
3 וְנוֹחֲלִין הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר לְהַנְחִיל אֹהֲבַי יֵשׁ
4 וְאוֹצְרוֹתֵיהֶם אֲמַלֵּא. אֲבָל תַּלְמִידָיו שֶׁל בִּלְעָם
5 הָרָשָׁע יוֹרְשִׁין גֵּיהִנֹּם וְיוֹרְדִין לִבְאֵר שַׁחַת שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר
6 וְאַתָּה אֱלֹהִים תּוֹרִדֵם לִבְאֵר שַׁחַת אַנְשֵׁי דָמִים
7 וּמִרְמָה לֹא יֶחֱצוּ יְמֵיהֶם וַאֲנִי אֶבְטַח בָּךְ: כג יְהוּדָה
8 בֶּן תֵּימָא אוֹמֵר הֱוֵי עַז כַּנָּמֵר וְקַל כַּנֶּשֶׁר רָץ כַּצְּבִי
9 וְגִבּוֹר כָּאֲרִי לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹן אָבִיךָ שֶׁבַּשָּׁמָיִם: כד הוּא
10 הָיָה אוֹמֵר עַז פָּנִים לְגֵיהִנֹּם וּבוּשֶׁת פָּנִים לְגַן עֵדֶן:
11 יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וֵאלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁיִּבָּנֶה
12 בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ בִּמְהֵרָה בְיָמֵינוּ וְתֵן חֶלְקֵנוּ בְּתוֹרָתֶךָ:
13 כה הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר בֶּן חָמֵשׁ שָׁנִים לַמִּקְרָא בֶּן עֶשֶׂר
14 שָׁנִים לַמִּשְׁנָה בֶּן שְׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה לַמִּצוֹת בֶּן חֲמֵשׁ
15 עֶשְׂרֵה לַגְּמָרָא בֶּן שְׁמוֹנָה עֶשְׂרֵה לַחֻפָּה בֶּן עֶשְׂרִים
16 לִרְדּוֹף בֶּן שְׁלֹשִׁים לַכֹּחַ בֶּן אַרְבָּעִים לַבִּינָה בֶּן
17 חֲמִשִּׁים לְעֵצָה בֶּן שִׁשִּׁים לִזְקָנָה בֶּן שִׁבְעִים לְשֵׂיבָה
18 בֶּן שְׁמוֹנִים לִגְבוּרָה בֶּן תִּשְׁעִים לָשׂוּחַ בֶּן מֵאָה
19 כְּאִלּוּ מֵת וְעָבַר וּבָטֵל מִן הָעוֹלָם: כו בֶּן בַּג בַּג
20 אוֹמֵר הָפֵךְ בָּהּ וַהֲפָךְ בָּהּ דְּכֹלָּא בָהּ וּבָהּ תֶּחֱזֵי

1 אַהֲבָה. וְשֶׁאֵינָהּ תְּלוּיָה בְּדָבָר אֵינָהּ בְּטֵלָה לָעוֹלָם.
2 אֵיזוֹ הִיא אַהֲבָה שֶׁהִיא תְלוּיָה בְּדָבָר זוֹ אַהֲבַת
3 אַמְנוֹן וְתָמָר. וְשֶׁאֵינָהּ תְּלוּיָה בְּדָבָר זוֹ אַהֲבַת דָּוִד
4 וְיהוֹנָתָן: כ כָּל מַחֲלֶקֶת שֶׁהִיא לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם סוֹפָהּ
5 לְהִתְקַיֵּם וְשֶׁאֵינָהּ לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם אֵין סוֹפָהּ לְהִתְקַיֵּם.
6 אֵיזוֹ הִיא מַחֲלֶקֶת שֶׁהִיא לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם זוֹ מַחֲלֶקֶת
7 הִלֵּל וְשַׁמַּאי. וְשֶׁאֵינָהּ לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם זוֹ מַחֲלֶקֶת קֹרַח
8 וְכָל עֲדָתוֹ: כא כָּל הַמְזַכֶּה אֶת הָרַבִּים אֵין חֵטְא
9 בָּא עַל יָדוֹ וְכָל הַמַּחֲטִיא אֶת הָרַבִּים אֵין מַסְפִּיקִין
10 בְּיָדוֹ לַעֲשׂוֹת תְּשׁוּבָה. מֹשֶׁה זָכָה וְזִכָּה אֶת הָרַבִּים
11 זְכוּת הָרַבִּים תָּלוּי בּוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר צִדְקַת יְיָ עָשָׂה
12 וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו עִם יִשְׂרָאֵל: כב יָרָבְעָם בֶּן נְבָט חָטָא
13 וְהֶחֱטִיא אֶת הָרַבִּים חֵטְא הָרַבִּים תָּלוּי בּוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר
14 עַל חַטֹּאות יָרָבְעָם אֲשֶׁר חָטָא וַאֲשֶׁר הֶחֱטִיא אֶת
15 יִשְׂרָאֵל: כג כָּל מִי שֶׁיֵּשׁ בּוֹ שְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים הַלָּלוּ
16 הוּא מִתַּלְמִידָיו שֶׁל אַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ וּשְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים
17 אֲחֵרִים הוּא מִתַּלְמִידָיו שֶׁל בִּלְעָם הָרָשָׁע. עַיִן
18 טוֹבָה וְרוּחַ נְמוּכָה וְנֶפֶשׁ שְׁפָלָה תַּלְמִידָיו שֶׁל
19 אַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ. עַיִן רָעָה וְרוּחַ גְּבוֹהָה וְנֶפֶשׁ רְחָבָה
20 תַּלְמִידָיו שֶׁל בִּלְעָם הָרָשָׁע. מַה בֵּין תַּלְמִידָיו שֶׁל

1 בְּשִׁבְעָה. קָשֶׁה לִכְעוֹס וְקָשֶׁה לִרְצוֹת יָצָא שְׁכָרוֹ
2 בְּהֶפְסֵדוֹ. קָשֶׁה לִכְעוֹס וְנוֹחַ לִרְצוֹת חָסִיד. נוֹחַ
3 לִכְעוֹס וְקָשֶׁה לִרְצוֹת רָשָׁע: ט אַרְבַּע מִדּוֹת
4 בְּתַלְמִידִים. מָהִיר לִשְׁמוֹעַ וּמָהִיר לְאַבֵּד יָצָא שְׁכָרוֹ
5 בְּהֶפְסֵדוֹ. קָשֶׁה לִשְׁמוֹעַ וְקָשֶׁה לְאַבֵּד יָצָא הֶפְסֵדוֹ
6 בְּשִׂכָרוֹ. מָהִיר לִשְׁמוֹעַ וְקָשֶׁה לְאַבֵּד זֶה חֵלֶק טוֹב.
7 קָשֶׁה לִשְׁמוֹעַ וּמָהִיר לְאַבֵּד זֶה חֵלֶק רָע: ט אַרְבַּע
8 מִדּוֹת בְּגוֹתְנֵי צְדָקָה. הָרוֹצֶה שֶׁיִּתֵּן וְלֹא יִתְּנוּ
9 אֲחֵרִים עֵינוֹ רָעָה בְּשֶׁל אֲחֵרִים. יִתְּנוּ אֲחֵרִים וְהוּא
10 לֹא יִתֵּן עֵינוֹ רָעָה בְּשֶׁלּוֹ. יִתֵּן וְיִתְּנוּ אֲחֵרִים חָסִיד
11 לֹא יִתֵּן וְלֹא יִתְּנוּ אֲחֵרִים רָשָׁע: י אַרְבַּע מִדּוֹת
12 בְּהוֹלְכֵי בֵּית הַמִּדְרָשׁ. הוֹלֵךְ וְאֵינוֹ עוֹשֶׂה שְׂכַר
13 הֲלִיכָה בְּיָדוֹ. עוֹשֶׂה וְאֵינוֹ הוֹלֵךְ שְׂכַר מַעֲשֶׂה בְּיָדוֹ.
14 הוֹלֵךְ וְעוֹשֶׂה חָסִיד. לֹא הוֹלֵךְ וְלֹא עוֹשֶׂה רָשָׁע:
15 יא אַרְבַּע מִדּוֹת בְּיוֹשְׁבִים לִפְנֵי חֲכָמִים. סְפוֹג
16 וּמַשְׁפֵּךְ מְשַׁמֶּרֶת וְנָפָה. סְפוֹג שֶׁהוּא סוֹפֵג אֶת
17 הַכֹּל. וּמַשְׁפֵּךְ שֶׁמַּכְנִיס בְּזוֹ וּמוֹצִיא בְּזוֹ. מְשַׁמֶּרֶת
18 שֶׁמּוֹצִיאָה אֶת הַיַּיִן וְקוֹלֶטֶת אֶת הַשְּׁמָרִים. וְנָפָה
19 שֶׁמּוֹצִיאָה אֶת הַקֶּמַח וְקוֹלֶטֶת אֶת הַסֹּלֶת:
20 יב כָּל אַהֲבָה שֶׁהִיא תְלוּיָה בְּדָבָר בָּטֵל דָּבָר בָּטֵלָה

1 רְעֵבִים וּמְקַצָּתָן שְׂבֵעִים. גָּמְרוּ שֶׁלֹּא לְעַשֵּׂר רָעָב
2 שֶׁל מְחוּמָה וְשֶׁל בַּצֹּרֶת בָּא. וְשֶׁלֹּא לִטּוֹל אֶת
3 הַחַלָּה רָעָב שֶׁל כְּלָיָה בָּא: יא דֶּבֶר בָּא לָעוֹלָם עַל
4 מִיתוֹת הָאֲמוּרוֹת בַּתּוֹרָה שֶׁלֹּא נִמְסְרוּ לְבֵית דִּין
5 וְעַל פֵּרוֹת שְׁבִיעִית: חֶרֶב בָּאָה לָעוֹלָם עַל עִנּוּי הַדִּין
6 וְעַל עִוּוּת הַדִּין וְעַל הַמּוֹרִים בַּתּוֹרָה שֶׁלֹּא כַהֲלָכָה:
7 חַיָּה רָעָה בָּאָה לָעוֹלָם עַל שְׁבוּעַת שָׁוְא וְעַל חִלּוּל
8 הַשֵּׁם: גָּלוּת בָּאָה לָעוֹלָם עַל עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים וְעַל
9 גִּלּוּי עֲרָיוֹת וְעַל שְׁפִיכוּת דָּמִים וְעַל שְׁמִיטַּת הָאָרֶץ:
10 יב בְּאַרְבָּעָה פְּרָקִים הַדֶּבֶר מִתְרַבֶּה. בָּרְבִיעִית
11 וּבַשְּׁבִיעִית וּבְמוֹצָאֵי שְׁבִיעִית וּבְמוֹצָאֵי חָג שֶׁבְּכָל
12 שָׁנָה וְשָׁנָה. בָּרְבִיעִית מִפְּנֵי מַעֲשַׂר עָנִי שֶׁבַּשְּׁלִישִׁית.
13 בַּשְּׁבִיעִית מִפְּנֵי מַעֲשַׂר עָנִי שֶׁבַּשִּׁשִּׁית. בְּמוֹצָאֵי
14 שְׁבִיעִית מִפְּנֵי פֵּרוֹת שְׁבִיעִית. בְּמוֹצָאֵי חָג שֶׁבְּכָל
15 שָׁנָה וְשָׁנָה מִפְּנֵי גֶּזֶל מַתְּנוֹת עֲנִיִּים: יג אַרְבַּע מִדּוֹת
16 בָּאָדָם. הָאוֹמֵר שֶׁלִּי שֶׁלִּי וְשֶׁלְּךָ שֶׁלָּךְ זוֹ מִדָּה
17 בֵּינונִית וְיֵשׁ אוֹמְרִים זוֹ מִדַּת סְדוֹם. שֶׁלִּי שֶׁלָּךְ
18 וְשֶׁלְּךָ שֶׁלִּי עַם הָאָרֶץ. שֶׁלִּי שֶׁלָּךְ וְשֶׁלְּךָ שֶׁלָּךְ
19 חָסִיד. שֶׁלְּךָ שֶׁלִּי וְשֶׁלִּי שֶׁלִּי רָשָׁע: יד אַרְבַּע מִדּוֹת
20 בְּדֵעוֹת. נוֹחַ לִכְעוֹס וְנוֹחַ לְרְצוֹת יָצָא הֶפְסֵדוֹ

1 נְרָאָה זְבוּב בְּבֵית הַמִּטְבְּחַיִם וְלֹא אִירַע קֶרִי לְכֹהֵן
2 גָּדוֹל בְּיוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים וְלֹא כִבּוּ הַגְּשָׁמִים אֵשׁ שֶׁל עֲצֵי
3 הַמַּעֲרָכָה וְלֹא נִצְּחָה הָרוּחַ אֶת עַמּוּד הֶעָשָׁן וְלֹא
4 נִמְצָא פְּסוּל בָּעֹמֶר וּבִשְׁתֵּי הַלֶּחֶם וּבְלֶחֶם הַפָּנִים,
5 עוֹמְדִים צְפוּפִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים רְוָחִים, וְלֹא הִזִּיק נָחָשׁ
6 וְעַקְרָב בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם מֵעוֹלָם וְלֹא אָמַר אָדָם לַחֲבֵרוֹ
7 צַר לִי הַמָּקוֹם שֶׁאָלִין בִּירוּשָׁלָיִם: ח עֲשָׂרָה דְבָרִים
8 נִבְרְאוּ בְעֶרֶב שַׁבָּת בֵּין הַשְּׁמָשׁוֹת וְאֵלּוּ הֵן, פִּי
9 הָאָרֶץ פִּי הַבְּאֵר פִּי הָאָתוֹן הַקֶּשֶׁת וְהַמָּן וְהַמַּטֶּה
10 וְהַשָּׁמִיר הַכְּתָב וְהַמִּכְתָּב וְהַלֻּחוֹת. וְיֵשׁ אוֹמְרִים
11 אַף הַמַּזִּיקִין וּקְבָרָתוֹ שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה וְאֵילוֹ שֶׁל אַבְרָהָם
12 אָבִינוּ וְיֵשׁ אוֹמְרִים אַף צְבָת בִּצְבַת עֲשׂוּיָה: ט שִׁבְעָה
13 דְבָרִים בְּגֹלֶם וְשִׁבְעָה בְּחָכָם. חָכָם אֵינוֹ מְדַבֵּר לִפְנֵי
14 מִי שֶׁגָּדוֹל מִמֶּנּוּ בְּחָכְמָה וּבְמִנְיָן וְאֵינוֹ נִכְנָס לְתוֹךְ
15 דִּבְרֵי חֲבֵרוֹ וְאֵינוֹ נִבְהָל לְהָשִׁיב שׁוֹאֵל כְּעִנְיָן וּמֵשִׁיב
16 כַּהֲלָכָה וְאוֹמֵר עַל רִאשׁוֹן רִאשׁוֹן וְעַל אַחֲרוֹן אַחֲרוֹן
17 וְעַל מַה שֶּׁלֹּא שָׁמַע אוֹמֵר לֹא שָׁמַעְתִּי וּמוֹדֶה עַל
18 הָאֱמֶת. וְחִלּוּפֵיהֶן בְּגֹלֶם: י שִׁבְעָה מִינֵי פּוּרְעָנִיּוֹת
19 בָּאִין לָעוֹלָם עַל שִׁבְעָה גּוּפֵי עֲבֵרָה. מִקְצָתָן מְעַשְּׂרִין
20 וּמִקְצָתָן אֵינָן מְעַשְּׂרִין רָעָב שֶׁל בַּצֹּרֶת בָּא מִקְצָתָן

1 א בַּעֲשָׂרָה מַאֲמָרוֹת נִבְרָא הָעוֹלָם וּמַה תַּלְמוּד
2 לוֹמַר וַהֲלֹא בְּמַאֲמָר אֶחָד יָכוֹל לְהִבָּרְאוֹת אֶלָּא
3 לְהַפְרַע מִן הָרְשָׁעִים שֶׁמְּאַבְּדִין אֶת הָעוֹלָם שֶׁנִּבְרָא
4 בַּעֲשָׂרָה מַאֲמָרוֹת וְלִתֵּן שָׂכָר טוֹב לַצַּדִּיקִים
5 שְׁמְקַיְּמִין אֶת הָעוֹלָם שֶׁנִּבְרָא בַּעֲשָׂרָה מַאֲמָרוֹת:
6 ב עֲשָׂרָה דוֹרוֹת מֵאָדָם וְעַד נֹחַ לְהוֹדִיעַ כַּמָּה אֶרֶךְ
7 אַפַּיִם לְפָנָיו שֶׁכָּל הַדּוֹרוֹת הָיוּ מַכְעִיסִין וּבָאִין עַד
8 שֶׁהֵבִיא עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת מֵי הַמַּבּוּל: ג עֲשָׂרָה דוֹרוֹת
9 מִנֹּחַ וְעַד אַבְרָהָם לְהוֹדִיעַ כַּמָּה אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם לְפָנָיו
10 שֶׁכָּל הַדּוֹרוֹת הָיוּ מַכְעִיסִין וּבָאִין עַד שֶׁבָּא אַבְרָהָם
11 אָבִינוּ וְקִבֵּל שְׂכַר כֻּלָּם: ד עֲשָׂרָה נִסְיוֹנוֹת נִתְנַסָּה
12 אַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ וְעָמַד בְּכֻלָּם לְהוֹדִיעַ כַּמָּה חִבָּתוֹ שֶׁל
13 אַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ: ה עֲשָׂרָה נִסִּים נַעֲשׂוּ לַאֲבוֹתֵינוּ
14 בְּמִצְרַיִם וַעֲשָׂרָה עַל הַיָּם: עֶשֶׂר מַכּוֹת הֵבִיא
15 הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא עַל הַמִּצְרִים בְּמִצְרַיִם וְעֶשֶׂר עַל
16 הַיָּם: ו עֲשָׂרָה נִסְיוֹנוֹת נִסּוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֶת הַקָּדוֹשׁ
17 בָּרוּךְ הוּא בַּמִּדְבָּר שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וַיְנַסּוּ אֹתִי זֶה עֶשֶׂר
18 פְּעָמִים וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ בְּקוֹלִי: ז עֲשָׂרָה נִסִּים נַעֲשׂוּ
19 לַאֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּבֵית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ. לֹא הִפִּילָה אִשָּׁה מֵרֵיחַ
20 בְּשַׂר הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְלֹא הִסְרִיחַ בְּשַׂר הַקֹּדֶשׁ מֵעוֹלָם וְלֹא

פרק רביעי

1 וְיָשָׁן שֶׁאֲפִילוּ חָדָשׁ אֵין בּוֹ: כח רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר הַקַּפָּר
2 אוֹמֵר הַקִּנְאָה וְהַתַּאֲוָה וְהַכָּבוֹד מוֹצִיאִין אֶת הָאָדָם
3 מִן הָעוֹלָם: כט הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר הַיְלוּדִים לָמוּת
4 וְהַמֵּתִים לְחָיוֹת וְהַחַיִּים לִדּוֹן לֵידַע וּלְהוֹדִיעַ וּלְהִוָּדַע
5 שֶׁהוּא אֵל הוּא הַיּוֹצֵר הוּא הַבּוֹרֵא הוּא הַמֵּבִין הוּא
6 הַדַּיָּן הוּא הָעֵד הוּא בַּעַל דִּין הוּא עָתִיד לָדוּן. בָּרוּךְ
7 הוּא שֶׁאֵין לְפָנָיו לֹא עַוְלָה וְלֹא שְׁכְחָה וְלֹא מַשּׂוֹא
8 פָּנִים וְלֹא מִקַּח שֹׁחַד. וְדַע שֶׁהַכֹּל לְפִי הַחֶשְׁבּוֹן
9 וְאַל יַבְטִיחֲךָ יִצְרֶךָ שֶׁהַשְׁאוֹל בֵּית מָנוֹס לָךְ שֶׁעַל
10 כָּרְחֲךָ אַתָּה נוֹצָר וְעַל כָּרְחֲךָ אַתָּה נוֹלָד וְעַל כָּרְחֲךָ
11 אַתָּה חַי וְעַל כָּרְחֲךָ אַתָּה מֵת וְעַל כָּרְחֲךָ אַתָּה עָתִיד
12 לִתֵּן דִּין וְחֶשְׁבּוֹן לִפְנֵי מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים הַקָּדוֹשׁ
13 בָּרוּךְ הוּא:

14 רַבִּי חֲנַנְיָא בֶּן עֲקַשְׁיָא אוֹמֵר רָצָה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא לְזַכּוֹת
15 אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפִיכָךְ הִרְבָּה לָהֶם תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר יְיָ חָפֵץ
16 לְמַעַן צִדְקוֹ יַגְדִּיל תּוֹרָה וְיַאְדִּיר:

פרק חמישי

17 בְּכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ לָהֶם חֵלֶק לָעוֹלָם הַבָּא. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר
18 וְעַמֵּךְ כֻּלָּם צַדִּיקִים לְעוֹלָם יִירְשׁוּ אֶרֶץ נֵצֶר
19 מַטָּעַי מַעֲשֵׂה יָדַי לְהִתְפָּאֵר:

1 יַעֲקֹב אוֹמֵר הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה דּוֹמֶה לִפְרוֹזְדוֹר בִּפְנֵי
2 הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא הַתְקֵן עַצְמְךָ בִּפְרוֹזְדוֹר כְּדֵי שֶׁתִּכָּנֵס
3 לְטַרְקְלִין׃ כג הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר יָפָה שָׁעָה אַחַת
4 בִּתְשׁוּבָה וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים בָּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה מִכֹּל חַיֵּי
5 הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא וְיָפָה שָׁעָה אַחַת שֶׁל קוֹרַת רוּחַ בָּעוֹלָם
6 הַבָּא מִכֹּל חַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה׃ כד רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן
7 אֶלְעָזָר אוֹמֵר אַל תְּרַצֵּה אֶת חֲבֵרְךָ בִּשְׁעַת כַּעְסוֹ
8 וְאַל תְּנַחֲמֵהוּ בְּשָׁעָה שֶׁמֵּתוֹ מוּטָל לְפָנָיו וְאַל תִּשְׁאַל
9 לוֹ בִּשְׁעַת נִדְרוֹ וְאַל תְּשַׁתְּדֵל לְרָאוֹתוֹ בִּשְׁעַת
10 קְלָלָתוֹ׃ כה שְׁמוּאֵל הַקָּטָן אוֹמֵר בִּנְפֹל אוֹיִבְךָ
11 אַל תִּשְׂמָח וּבִכָּשְׁלוֹ אַל יָגֵל לִבֶּךָ פֶּן יִרְאֶה יְיָ וְרַע
12 בְּעֵינָיו וְהֵשִׁיב מֵעָלָיו אַפּוֹ׃ כו אֱלִישָׁע בֶּן אֲבוּיָה
13 אוֹמֵר הַלּוֹמֵד יֶלֶד לְמָה הוּא דוֹמֶה לְדִיו כְּתוּבָה עַל
14 נְיָר חָדָשׁ וְהַלּוֹמֵד זָקֵן לְמָה הוּא דוֹמֶה לְדִיו כְּתוּבָה
15 עַל נְיָר מָחוּק׃ כז רַבִּי יוֹסֵי בַּר יְהוּדָה אִישׁ כְּפַר
16 הַבַּבְלִי אוֹמֵר הַלּוֹמֵד מִן הַקְּטַנִּים לְמָה הוּא דוֹמֶה
17 לְאוֹכֵל עֲנָבִים קֶהוֹת וְשׁוֹתֶה יַיִן מִגִּתּוֹ וְהַלּוֹמֵד מִן
18 הַזְּקֵנִים לְמָה הוּא דוֹמֶה לְאוֹכֵל עֲנָבִים בְּשׁוּלוֹת
19 וְשׁוֹתֶה יַיִן יָשָׁן׃ כח רַבִּי מֵאִיר אוֹמֵר אַל תִּסְתַּכֵּל
20 בְּקַנְקַן אֶלָּא בְּמַה שֶּׁיֵּשׁ בּוֹ יֵשׁ קַנְקַן חָדָשׁ מָלֵא יָשָׁן

1 לָךְ בְּטֵלִים הַרְבֵּה כְּנֶגְדָּךְ וְאִם עָמַלְתָּ בַּתּוֹרָה יֶשׁ
2 לוֹ שָׂכָר הַרְבֵּה לִתֵּן לָךְ: יג רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר בֶּן יַעֲקֹב
3 אוֹמֵר הָעוֹשֶׂה מִצְוָה אַחַת קוֹנֶה לוֹ פַּרְקְלִיט אֶחָד
4 וְהָעוֹבֵר עֲבֵרָה אַחַת קוֹנֶה לוֹ קַטֵּגוֹר אֶחָד תְּשׁוּבָה
5 וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים כּוֹתְרִים בִּפְנֵי הַפּוּרְעָנוּת: יד רַבִּי
6 יוֹחָנָן הַסַּנְדְּלָר אוֹמֵר כָּל כְּנֶסְיָה שֶׁהִיא לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם
7 סוֹפָהּ לְהִתְקַיֵּם וְשֶׁאֵינָהּ לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם אֵין סוֹפָהּ
8 לְהִתְקַיֵּם: טו רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן שַׁמּוּעַ אוֹמֵר יְהִי
9 כְבוֹד תַּלְמִידְךָ חָבִיב עָלֶיךָ כְּשֶׁלְּךָ וּכְבוֹד חֲבֵרְךָ
10 כְּמוֹרָא רַבְּךָ וּמוֹרָא רַבְּךָ כְּמוֹרָא שָׁמָיִם: טז רַבִּי
11 יְהוּדָה אוֹמֵר הֱוֵי זָהִיר בְּתַלְמוּד שֶׁשִּׁגְגַת תַּלְמוּד
12 עוֹלָה זָדוֹן: יז רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן אוֹמֵר שִׁלְשָׁה כְתָרִים
13 הֵן כֶּתֶר תּוֹרָה וְכֶתֶר כְּהֻנָּה וְכֶתֶר מַלְכוּת וְכֶתֶר
14 שֵׁם טוֹב עוֹלֶה עַל גַּבֵּיהֶן: יח רַבִּי נְהוֹרַאי אוֹמֵר
15 הֱוֵי גוֹלֶה לִמְקוֹם תּוֹרָה וְאַל תֹּאמַר שֶׁהִיא תָּבוֹא
16 אַחֲרֶיךָ שֶׁחֲבֵרֶיךָ יְקַיְּמוּהָ בְיָדֶךָ וְאֶל בִּינָתְךָ אַל
17 תִּשָּׁעֵן: יט רַבִּי יַנַּאי אוֹמֵר אֵין בְּיָדֵינוּ לֹא מְשַׁלְוַת
18 הָרְשָׁעִים וְאַף לֹא מִיסּוּרֵי הַצַּדִּיקִים: כ רַבִּי מַתְיָא
19 בֶּן חָרָשׁ אוֹמֵר הֱוֵי מַקְדִּים בִּשְׁלוֹם כָּל אָדָם וֱהֵוִי
20 זָנָב לָאֲרָיוֹת וְאַל תְּהִי רֹאשׁ לַשְּׁעָלִים: כא רַבִּי

1 בְּחִלּוּל הַשֵּׁם: ו רַבִּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל בַּר רַבִּי יוֹסֵי אוֹמֵר
2 הַלּוֹמֵד עַל מְנָת לְלַמֵּד מַסְפִּיקִין בְּיָדוֹ לִלְמוֹד וּלְלַמֵּד
3 וְהַלּוֹמֵד עַל מְנָת לַעֲשׂוֹת מַסְפִּיקִין בְּיָדוֹ לִלְמוֹד
4 וּלְלַמֵּד לִשְׁמוֹר וְלַעֲשׂוֹת: ז רַבִּי צָדוֹק אוֹמֵר אַל תִּפְרוֹשׁ
5 מִן הַצִּבּוּר וְאַל תַּעֲשׂ עַצְמְךָ כְּעוֹרְכֵי הַדַּיָּנִין וְאַל
6 תַּעֲשֶׂהָ עֲטָרָה לְהִתְגַּדֵּל בָּהּ וְלֹא קַרְדֹּום לַחְפֹּר בָּהּ.
7 וְכָךְ הָיָה הִלֵּל אוֹמֵר וּדְאִשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בְּתָגָא חֲלָף. הָא
8 לָמַדְתָּ כָּל הַנֶּהֱנֶה מִדִּבְרֵי תוֹרָה נוֹטֵל חַיָּיו מִן
9 הָעוֹלָם: ח רַבִּי יוֹסֵי אוֹמֵר כָּל הַמְכַבֵּד אֶת הַתּוֹרָה
10 גּוּפוֹ מְכֻבָּד עַל הַבְּרִיּוֹת וְכָל הַמְחַלֵּל אֶת הַתּוֹרָה
11 גּוּפוֹ מְחֻלָּל עַל הַבְּרִיּוֹת: ט רַבִּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל בְּנוֹ אוֹמֵר
12 הַחושֵׂךְ עַצְמוֹ מִן הַדִּין פּוֹרֵק מִמֶּנּוּ אֵיבָה וְגָזֵל
13 וּשְׁבוּעַת שָׁוְא וְהַגַּס לִבּוֹ בְּהוֹרָאָה שׁוֹטֶה רָשָׁע וְגַס
14 רוּחַ: י הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר אַל תְּהִי דָן יְחִידִי שֶׁאֵין
15 דָּן יְחִידִי אֶלָּא אֶחָד וְאַל תֹּאמַר קַבְּלוּ דַעְתִּי שֶׁהֵן
16 רַשָּׁאִין וְלֹא אַתָּה: יא רַבִּי יוֹנָתָן אוֹמֵר כָּל הַמְקַיֵּם
17 אֶת הַתּוֹרָה מֵעֹנִי סוֹפוֹ לְקַיְּמָהּ מֵעֹשֶׁר וְכָל הַמְבַטֵּל
18 אֶת הַתּוֹרָה מֵעֹשֶׁר סוֹפוֹ לְבַטְּלָהּ מֵעֹנִי: יב רַבִּי
19 מֵאִיר אוֹמֵר הֱוֵי מְמַעֵט בְּעֵסֶק וַעֲסוֹק בַּתּוֹרָה וֱהֱוֵי
20 שְׁפַל רוּחַ בִּפְנֵי כָל אָדָם וְאִם בִּטַּלְתָּ מִן הַתּוֹרָה יֶשׁ

1 כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ לָהֶם חֵלֶק לָעוֹלָם הַבָּא. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר
2 וְעַמֵּךְ כֻּלָּם צַדִּיקִים לְעוֹלָם יִירְשׁוּ אָרֶץ נֵצֶר
3 מַטָּעַי מַעֲשֵׂה יָדַי לְהִתְפָּאֵר:
4 א בֶּן זוֹמָא אוֹמֵר אֵיזֶהוּ חָכָם הַלּוֹמֵד מִכָּל אָדָם
5 שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר מִכָּל מְלַמְּדַי הִשְׂכַּלְתִּי (כִּי עֵדְוֹתֶיךָ שִׂיחָה
6 לִי): אֵיזֶהוּ גִבּוֹר הַכּוֹבֵשׁ אֶת יִצְרוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר טוֹב
7 אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם מִגִּבּוֹר וּמוֹשֵׁל בְּרוּחוֹ מִלֹּכֵד עִיר: אֵיזֶהוּ
8 עָשִׁיר הַשָּׂמֵחַ בְּחֶלְקוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר יְגִיעַ כַּפֶּיךָ כִּי תֹאכֵל
9 אַשְׁרֶיךָ וְטוֹב לָךְ אַשְׁרֶיךָ בָּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְטוֹב לָךְ
10 לָעוֹלָם הַבָּא: אֵיזֶהוּ מְכֻבָּד הַמְכַבֵּד אֶת הַבְּרִיּוֹת
11 שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר כִּי מְכַבְּדַי אֲכַבֵּד וּבֹזַי יֵקָלּוּ: ב בֶּן עַזַּאי
12 אוֹמֵר הֱוֵי רָץ לְמִצְוָה קַלָּה וּבוֹרֵחַ מִן הָעֲבֵרָה שֶׁמִּצְוָה
13 גוֹרֶרֶת מִצְוָה וַעֲבֵרָה גוֹרֶרֶת עֲבֵרָה שֶׁשְּׂכַר מִצְוָה
14 מִצְוָה וּשְׂכַר עֲבֵרָה עֲבֵרָה: ג הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר
15 אַל תְּהִי בָז לְכָל אָדָם וְאַל תְּהִי מַפְלִיג לְכָל
16 דָּבָר שֶׁאֵין לְךָ אָדָם שֶׁאֵין לוֹ שָׁעָה וְאֵין לְךָ דָּבָר
17 שֶׁאֵין לוֹ מָקוֹם: ד רַבִּי לֵוִיטַס אִישׁ יַבְנֶה אוֹמֵר
18 מְאֹד מְאֹד הֱוֵי שְׁפַל רוּחַ שֶׁתִּקְוַת אֱנוֹשׁ רִמָּה:
19 ה רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן בֶּן בְּרוֹקָא אוֹמֵר כָּל הַמְחַלֵּל שֵׁם שָׁמַיִם
20 בְּסֵתֶר נִפְרָעִין מִמֶּנּוּ בְּגָלוּי אֶחָד שׁוֹגֵג וְאֶחָד מֵזִיד

1 אוֹמֵר אִם אֵין תּוֹרָה אֵין דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ אִם אֵין דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ
2 אֵין תּוֹרָה אִם אֵין חָכְמָה אֵין יִרְאָה אִם אֵין יִרְאָה אֵין
3 חָכְמָה אִם אֵין דַּעַת אֵין בִּינָה אִם אֵין בִּינָה אֵין דַּעַת אִם
4 אֵין קֶמַח אֵין תּוֹרָה אִם אֵין תּוֹרָה אֵין קֶמַח׃
5 כב הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר כֹּל שֶׁחָכְמָתוֹ מְרֻבָּה מִמַּעֲשָׂיו
6 לְמָה הוּא דוֹמֶה לְאִילָן שֶׁעֲנָפָיו מְרֻבִּין וְשָׁרָשָׁיו
7 מוּעָטִין וְהָרוּחַ בָּאָה וְעוֹקַרְתּוֹ וְהוֹפַכְתּוֹ עַל פָּנָיו
8 שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְהָיָה כְּעַרְעָר בָּעֲרָבָה. וְלֹא יִרְאֶה כִּי יָבֹא
9 טוֹב. וְשָׁכַן חֲרֵרִים בַּמִּדְבָּר. אֶרֶץ מְלֵחָה וְלֹא תֵשֵׁב.
10 אֲבָל כֹּל שֶׁמַּעֲשָׂיו מְרֻבִּין מֵחָכְמָתוֹ. לְמָה הוּא
11 דוֹמֶה. לְאִילָן שֶׁעֲנָפָיו מוּעָטִין וְשָׁרָשָׁיו מְרֻבִּין.
12 שֶׁאֲפִילוּ כָּל רוּחוֹת שֶׁבָּעוֹלָם בָּאוֹת וְנוֹשְׁבוֹת בּוֹ
13 אֵין מְזִיזִין אוֹתוֹ מִמְּקוֹמוֹ. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְהָיָה כְּעֵץ שָׁתוּל
14 עַל מַיִם וְעַל יוּבַל יְשַׁלַּח שָׁרָשָׁיו. וְלֹא יִרְאֶה כִּי
15 יָבֹא חוֹם. וְהָיָה עָלֵהוּ רַעֲנָן. וּבִשְׁנַת בַּצֹּרֶת לֹא
16 יִדְאָג. וְלֹא יָמִישׁ מֵעֲשׂוֹת פֶּרִי׃ כג רַבִּי אֱלָעָזָר
17 (בֶּן) חִסְמָא אוֹמֵר. קִנִּין וּפִתְחֵי נִדָּה. הֵן הֵן גּוּפֵי
18 הֲלָכוֹת. תְּקוּפוֹת וְגִמַּטְרִיָּאוֹת. פִּרְפְּרָאוֹת לַחָכְמָה׃
19 רַבִּי חֲנַנְיָא בֶּן עֲקַשְׁיָא אוֹמֵר רָצָה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא לְזַכּוֹת
20 אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפִיכָךְ הִרְבָּה לָהֶם תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר יְיָ חָפֵץ
21 לְמַעַן צִדְקוֹ יַגְדִּיל תּוֹרָה וְיַאְדִּיר׃

1 וְנוֹחַ לְתִשְׁחוֹרֶת וֶהֱוֵי מְקַבֵּל אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם בְּשִׂמְחָה׃
2 יז רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אוֹמֵר שְׂחוֹק וְקַלּוּת רֹאשׁ מַרְגִּילִין
3 אֶת הָאָדָם לְעֶרְוָה . מַסּוֹרֶת סְיָג לַתּוֹרָה מַעֲשְׂרוֹת
4 סְיָג לָעֹשֶׁר נְדָרִים סְיָג לַפְּרִישׁוּת . סְיָג לַחָכְמָה
5 שְׁתִיקָה ׃ יח הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר חָבִיב אָדָם שֶׁנִּבְרָא
6 בְּצֶלֶם . חִבָּה יְתֵרָה נוֹדַעַת לוֹ שֶׁנִּבְרָא בְּצֶלֶם שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר
7 כִּי בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים עָשָׂה אֶת הָאָדָם ׃ חֲבִיבִין יִשְׂרָאֵל
8 שֶׁנִּקְרְאוּ בָנִים לַמָּקוֹם . חִבָּה יְתֵרָה נוֹדַעַת לָהֶם
9 שֶׁנִּקְרְאוּ בָנִים לַמָּקוֹם שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בָּנִים אַתֶּם לַיי
10 אֱלֹהֵיכֶם ׃ חֲבִיבִין יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁנִּתַּן לָהֶם כְּלִי חֶמְדָּה .
11 חִבָּה יְתֵרָה נוֹדַעַת לָהֶם שֶׁנִּתַּן לָהֶם כְּלִי חֶמְדָּה
12 שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר כִּי לֶקַח טוֹב נָתַתִּי לָכֶם תּוֹרָתִי אַל
13 תַּעֲזֹבוּ ׃ יט הַכֹּל צָפוּי וְהָרְשׁוּת נְתוּנָה וּבְטוּב
14 הָעוֹלָם נָדוֹן וְהַכֹּל לְפִי רֹב הַמַּעֲשֶׂה ׃ כ הוּא הָיָה
15 אוֹמֵר הַכֹּל נָתוּן בָּעֲרָבוֹן וּמְצוּדָה פְרוּסָה עַל כָּל
16 הַחַיִּים הֶחָנוּת פְּתוּחָה וְהַחֶנְוָנִי מַקִּיף וְהַפִּנְקָס פָּתוּחַ
17 וְהַיָּד כּוֹתֶבֶת וְכָל הָרוֹצֶה לִלְוֹות יָבֹא וְיִלְוֶה וְהַגַּבָּאִים
18 מַחֲזִירִין תָּדִיר בְּכָל יוֹם וְנִפְרָעִין מִן הָאָדָם מִדַּעְתּוֹ
19 וְשֶׁלֹּא מִדַּעְתּוֹ וְיֵשׁ לָהֶם עַל מַה שֶּׁיִּסְמְכוּ וְהַדִּין דִּין
20 אֱמֶת וְהַכֹּל מְתֻקָּן לִסְעוּדָה ׃ כא רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲזַרְיָה

1 אֲשֶׁר רָאוּ עֵינֶיךָ. יָכוֹל אֲפִילוּ תָּקְפָה עָלָיו מִשְׁנָתוֹ.
2 תַּלְמוּד לוֹמַר וּפֶן יָסוּרוּ מִלְּבָבְךָ כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ הָא
3 אֵינוֹ מִתְחַיֵּב בְּנַפְשׁוֹ עַד שֶׁיֵּשֵׁב וְיסִירֵם מִלִּבּוֹ:
4 יא רַבִּי חֲנִינָא בֶּן דּוֹסָא אוֹמֵר כָּל שֶׁיִּרְאַת חֶטְאוֹ
5 קוֹדֶמֶת לְחָכְמָתוֹ חָכְמָתוֹ מִתְקַיֶּמֶת. וְכָל שֶׁחָכְמָתוֹ
6 קוֹדֶמֶת לְיִרְאַת חֶטְאוֹ אֵין חָכְמָתוֹ מִתְקַיֶּמֶת: יב הוּא
7 הָיָה אוֹמֵר כָּל שֶׁמַּעֲשָׂיו מְרֻבִּין מֵחָכְמָתוֹ חָכְמָתוֹ
8 מִתְקַיֶּמֶת. וְכָל שֶׁחָכְמָתוֹ מְרֻבָּה מִמַּעֲשָׂיו אֵין
9 חָכְמָתוֹ מִתְקַיֶּמֶת: יג הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר כָּל שֶׁרוּחַ
10 הַבְּרִיּוֹת נוֹחָה הֵימֶנּוּ רוּחַ הַמָּקוֹם נוֹחָה הֵימֶנּוּ וְכָל
11 שֶׁאֵין רוּחַ הַבְּרִיּוֹת נוֹחָה הֵימֶנּוּ אֵין רוּחַ הַמָּקוֹם
12 נוֹחָה הֵימֶנּוּ: יד רַבִּי דוֹסָא בֶּן הַרְכִּינַס אוֹמֵר שֵׁנָה
13 שֶׁל שַׁחֲרִית וְיַיִן שֶׁל צָהֳרַיִם וְשִׂיחַת הַיְלָדִים וְישִׁיבַת
14 בָּתֵּי כְנֻסִיּוֹת שֶׁל עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ מוֹצִיאִין אֶת הָאָדָם
15 מִן הָעוֹלָם: טו רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר הַמּוֹדָעִי אוֹמֵר הַמְחַלֵּל
16 אֶת הַקָּדָשִׁים וְהַמְבַזֶּה אֶת הַמּוֹעֲדוֹת וְהַמַּלְבִּין פְּנֵי
17 חֲבֵרוֹ בָּרַבִּים וְהַמֵּפֵר בְּרִיתוֹ שֶׁל אַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ
18 וְהַמְגַלֶּה פָּנִים בַּתּוֹרָה שֶׁלֹּא כַהֲלָכָה אַף עַל פִּי
19 שֶׁיֵּשׁ בְּיָדוֹ תּוֹרָה וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים אֵין לוֹ חֵלֶק
20 לָעוֹלָם הַבָּא: טז רַבִּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל אוֹמֵר הֱוֵי קַל לְרֹאשׁ

1 עול תורה מעברין ממנו עול מלכות ועול דרך
2 ארץ וכל הפורק ממנו עול תורה נותנין עליו עול
3 מלכות ועול דרך ארץ: י רבי חלפתא בן דוסא
4 איש כפר חנניא אומר עשרה שיושבין ועוסקין
5 בתורה שכינה שרויה ביניהם שנאמר אלהים נצב
6 בעדת אל. ומנין אפילו חמשה שנאמר ואגדתו
7 על ארץ יסדה. ומנין אפילו שלשה שנאמר בקרב
8 אלהים ישפט. ומנין אפילו שנים שנאמר אז
9 נדברו יראי יי איש אל רעהו ויקשב יי וישמע.
10 ומנין אפילו אחד שנאמר בכל המקום אשר אזכיר
11 את שמי אבא אליך וברכתיך: יא רבי אלעזר
12 איש ברתותא אומר תן לו משלו שאתה ושלך
13 שלו וכן בדוד הוא אומר כי ממך הכל ומידך
14 נתנו לך: יב רבי יעקב אומר המהלך בדרך ושונה
15 ומפסיק ממשנתו ואומר מה נאה אילן זה מה
16 נאהניר זה מעלה עליו הכתוב כאלו מתחייב
17 בנפשו: יג רבי דוסתאי בר ינאי משום רבי מאיר
18 אומר כל השוכח דבר אחד ממשנתו מעלה עליו
19 הכתוב כאלו מתחייב בנפשו שנאמר רק השמר
20 לך ושמר נפשך יאד פן תשכח את הדברים

1 אומר היוי מתפלל בשלומה של מלכות שאלמלא
2 מוראה איש את רעהו חיים בלעו: ג רבי חנינא
3 בן תרדיון אומר שנים שיושבין ואין ביניהם דברי
4 תורה הרי זה מושב לצים שנאמר ובמושב לצים
5 לא ישב. אבל שנים שיושבין ויש ביניהם דברי
6 תורה שכינה שרויה ביניהם שנאמר אז נדברו
7 יראי יי איש אל רעהו ויקשב יי וישמע ויכתב
8 ספר זכרון לפניו ליראי יי ולחושבי שמו. אין לי
9 אלא שנים מנין אפילו אחד שיושב ועוסק בתורה
10 שהקדוש ברוך הוא קובע לו שכר. שנאמר ישב
11 בדד ויהום כי נטל עליו: ד רבי שמעון אומר
12 שלשה שאכלו על שלחן אחד ולא אמרו עליו
13 דברי תורה כאלו אכלו מזבחי מתים שנאמר כי
14 כל שלחנות מלאו קיא צואה בלי מקום. אבל
15 שלשה שאכלו על שלחן אחד ואמרו עליו דברי
16 תורה כאלו אכלו משלחנו של מקום. שנאמר
17 וידבר אלי זה השלחן אשר לפני יי: ה רבי חנינא
18 בן חכינאי אומר הנעור בלילה והמהלך בדרך
19 יחידי ומפנה לבו לבטלה הרי זה מתחייב בנפשו:
20 ו רבי נחוניא בן הקנה אומר כל המקבל עליו

1 וְהַשָּׂכָר הַרְבֵּה וּבַעַל הַבַּיִת דּוֹחֵק: כא הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר
2 לֹא עָלֶיךָ הַמְּלָאכָה לִגְמוֹר וְלֹא אַתָּה בֶּן חוֹרִין
3 לְהִבָּטֵל מִמֶּנָּה אִם לָמַדְתָּ תּוֹרָה הַרְבֵּה נוֹתְנִין לְךָ
4 שָׂכָר הַרְבֵּה וְנֶאֱמָן הוּא בַּעַל מְלַאכְתְּךָ שֶׁיְּשַׁלֵּם לְךָ
5 שְׂכַר פְּעֻלָּתֶךָ וְדַע שֶׁמַּתַּן שְׂכָרָן שֶׁל צַדִּיקִים
6 לֶעָתִיד לָבֹא:
7 רַבִּי חֲנַנְיָא בֶּן עֲקַשְׁיָא אוֹמֵר רָצָה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא לְזַכּוֹת
8 אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפִיכָךְ הִרְבָּה לָהֶם תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר יְיָ חָפֵץ
9 לְמַעַן צִדְקוֹ יַגְדִּיל תּוֹרָה וְיַאְדִּיר:

פרק שלישי

10 כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ לָהֶם חֵלֶק לָעוֹלָם הַבָּא. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר
11 וְעַמֵּךְ כֻּלָּם צַדִּיקִים לְעוֹלָם יִירְשׁוּ אָרֶץ נֵצֶר
12 מַטָּעַי מַעֲשֵׂה יָדַי לְהִתְפָּאֵר:
13 א עֲקַבְיָא בֶּן מַהַלַלְאֵל אוֹמֵר הִסְתַּכֵּל בִּשְׁלֹשָׁה
14 דְּבָרִים וְאֵין אַתָּה בָּא לִידֵי עֲבֵרָה. דַּע מֵאַיִן בָּאתָ
15 וּלְאָן אַתָּה הוֹלֵךְ וְלִפְנֵי מִי אַתָּה עָתִיד לִתֵּן דִּין
16 וְחֶשְׁבּוֹן. מֵאַיִן בָּאתָ מִטִּפָּה סְרוּחָה. וּלְאָן אַתָּה
17 הוֹלֵךְ לִמְקוֹם עָפָר רִמָּה וְתוֹלָעָה. וְלִפְנֵי מִי אַתָּה
18 עָתִיד לִתֵּן דִּין וְחֶשְׁבּוֹן לִפְנֵי מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים
19 הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא: ב רַבִּי חֲנִינָא סְגַן הַכֹּהֲנִים

1 מִדִּבְרֵיכֶם שֶׁבִּכְלַל דְּבָרָיו דִּבְרֵיכֶם: ט הֵם אָמְרוּ
2 שְׁלשָׁה דְבָרִים. רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אוֹמֵר יְהִי כְבוֹד חֲבֵרְךָ
3 חָבִיב עָלֶיךָ כְּשֶׁלְּךָ וְאַל תְּהִי נוֹחַ לִכְעוֹס וְשׁוּב יוֹם
4 אֶחָד לִפְנֵי מִיתָתֶךָ וְהֱוֵי מִתְחַמֵּם כְּנֶגֶד אוּרָן שֶׁל
5 חֲכָמִים וְהֱוֵי זָהִיר בְּגַחֲלָתָן שֶׁלֹּא תִכָּוֶה שִׁנְּשִׁיכָתָן
6 נְשִׁיכַת שׁוּעָל וַעֲקִיצָתָן עֲקִיצַת עַקְרָב וּלְחִישָׁתָן
7 לְחִישַׁת שָׂרָף וְכָל דִּבְרֵיהֶם. כְּגַחֲלֵי אֵשׁ: ט רַבִּי
8 יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אוֹמֵר עַיִן הָרָע וְיֵצֶר הָרָע וְשִׂנְאַת הַבְּרִיּוֹת
9 מוֹצִיאִין אֶת הָאָדָם מִן הָעוֹלָם: י רַבִּי יוֹסֵי אוֹמֵר
10 יְהִי מָמוֹן חֲבֵרְךָ חָבִיב עָלֶיךָ כְּשֶׁלְּךָ וְהַתְקֵן עַצְמְךָ
11 לִלְמוֹד תּוֹרָה שֶׁאֵינָהּ יְרֻשָּׁה לָךְ וְכָל מַעֲשֶׂיךָ יִהְיוּ
12 לְשֵׁם שָׁמָיִם: י רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן אוֹמֵר הֱוֵי זָהִיר בְּקְרִיאַת
13 שְׁמַע וּבִתְפִלָּה וּכְשֶׁאַתָּה מִתְפַּלֵּל אַל תַּעַשׂ תְּפִלָּתְךָ
14 קֶבַע אֶלָּא רַחֲמִים וְתַחֲנוּנִים לִפְנֵי הַמָּקוֹם שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר
15 כִּי חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם הוּא אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם וְרַב חֶסֶד וְנִחָם עַל
16 הָרָעָה. וְאַל תְּהִי רָשָׁע בִּפְנֵי עַצְמֶךָ: יט רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר
17 אוֹמֵר הֱוֵי שָׁקוּד לִלְמוֹד תּוֹרָה וְדַע מַה שֶּׁתָּשִׁיב
18 לְאֶפִּיקוֹרוֹס וְדַע לִפְנֵי מִי אַתָּה עָמֵל וּמִי הוּא בַּעַל
19 מְלַאכְתֶּךָ שֶׁיְּשַׁלֵּם לְךָ שְׂכַר פְּעֻלָּתֶךָ: כ רַבִּי טַרְפוֹן
20 אוֹמֵר הַיּוֹם קָצֵר וְהַמְּלָאכָה מְרֻבָּה וְהַפּוֹעֲלִים עֲצֵלִים

1 יוֹסֵי הַכֹּהֵן חָסִיד (רַבִּי) שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן נְתַנְאֵל יָרֵא חֵטְא
2 (רַבִּי) אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲרָךְ כְּמַעְיָן הַמִּתְגַּבֵּר: יג הוּא
3 הָיָה אוֹמֵר אִם יִהְיוּ כָּל חַכְמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכַף מֹאזְנַיִם
4 וְאֶלִיעֶזֶר בֶּן הוּרְקְנוֹס בְּכַף שְׁנִיָּה מַכְרִיעַ אֶת כֻּלָּם:
5 אַבָּא שָׁאוּל אוֹמֵר מִשְּׁמוֹ אִם יִהְיוּ כָּל חַכְמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
6 בְּכַף מֹאזְנַיִם וְאֶלִיעֶזֶר בֶּן הוּרְקְנוֹס אַף עִמָּהֶם
7 וְאֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲרָךְ בְּכַף שְׁנִיָּה מַכְרִיעַ אֶת כֻּלָּם:
8 יג אָמַר לָהֶם צְאוּ וּרְאוּ אֵיזוֹ הִיא דֶּרֶךְ טוֹבָה שֶׁיִּדְבַּק
9 בָּהּ הָאָדָם. רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אוֹמֵר עַיִן טוֹבָה רַבִּי
10 יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אוֹמֵר חָבֵר טוֹב רַבִּי יוֹסֵי אוֹמֵר שָׁכֵן טוֹב
11 רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן אוֹמֵר הָרוֹאֶה אֶת הַנּוֹלָד רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר
12 אוֹמֵר לֵב טוֹב. אָמַר לָהֶם רוֹאֶה אֲנִי אֶת דִּבְרֵי
13 אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲרָךְ מִדִּבְרֵיכֶם שֶׁבְּכְלַל דְּבָרָיו דִּבְרֵיכֶם:
14 יד אָמַר לָהֶם צְאוּ וּרְאוּ אֵיזוֹ הִיא דֶּרֶךְ רָעָה שֶׁיִּתְרַחֵק
15 מִמֶּנָּה הָאָדָם. רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אוֹמֵר עַיִן רָעָה רַבִּי
16 יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אוֹמֵר חָבֵר רָע רַבִּי יוֹסֵי אוֹמֵר שָׁכֵן רָע רַבִּי
17 שִׁמְעוֹן אוֹמֵר הַלֹּוֶה וְאֵינוֹ מְשַׁלֵּם אֶחָד הַלֹּוֶה מִן
18 הָאָדָם כְּלוֶה מִן הַמָּקוֹם שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר לוֶה רָשָׁע וְלֹא
19 יְשַׁלֵּם וְצַדִּיק חוֹנֵן וְנוֹתֵן רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר אוֹמֵר לֵב רָע.
20 אָמַר לָהֶם רוֹאֶה אֲנִי אֶת דִּבְרֵי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲרָךְ

1 מְלַמֵּד. וְלֹא כָּל הַמַּרְבֶּה בְּסְחוֹרָה מַחְכִּים וּבְמָקוֹם
2 שֶׁאֵין אֲנָשִׁים הִשְׁתַּדֵּל לִהְיוֹת אִישׁ: ז אַף הוּא
3 רָאָה גֻּלְגֹּלֶת אַחַת שֶׁצָּפָה עַל פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם אָמַר לָהּ
4 עַל דְּאַטְבְּעְתְּ אַטְבְּעוּ וְסוֹף מְטַיְּפַיִךְ יִטְּבְּעוּן: ח הוּא
5 הָיָה אוֹמֵר מַרְבֶּה בָּשָׂר מַרְבֶּה רִמָּה מַרְבֶּה נְכָסִים
6 מַרְבֶּה דְאָגָה מַרְבֶּה נָשִׁים מַרְבֶּה כְשָׁפִים מַרְבֶּה
7 שְׁפָחוֹת מַרְבֶּה זִמָּה מַרְבֶּה עֲבָדִים מַרְבֶּה גָּזֵל. מַרְבֶּה
8 תוֹרָה מַרְבֶּה חַיִּים מַרְבֶּה יְשִׁיבָה מַרְבֶּה חָכְמָה
9 מַרְבֶּה עֵצָה מַרְבֶּה תְּבוּנָה מַרְבֶּה צְדָקָה מַרְבֶּה
10 שָׁלוֹם קָנָה שֵׁם טוֹב קָנָה לְעַצְמוֹ קָנָה לוֹ דִּבְרֵי תוֹרָה
11 קָנָה לוֹ חַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא: ט רַבָּן יוֹחָנָן בֶּן זַכַּאי
12 קִבֵּל מֵהִלֵּל וּמִשַּׁמַאי. הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר אִם לָמַדְתָּ
13 תוֹרָה הַרְבֵּה אַל תַּחֲזִיק טוֹבָה לְעַצְמְךָ כִּי לְכָךְ
14 נוֹצַרְתָּ: י חֲמִשָּׁה תַלְמִידִים הָיוּ לוֹ לְרַבָּן יוֹחָנָן בֶּן
15 זַכַּאי וְאֵלּוּ הֵן רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר בֶּן הוּרְקְנוֹס רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ
16 בֶּן חֲנַנְיָא רַבִּי יוֹסֵי הַכֹּהֵן רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן נְתַנְאֵל
17 וְרַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲרָךְ: יא הוּא הָיָה מוֹנֶה שִׁבְחָם
18 (רַבִּי) אֱלִיעֶזֶר בֶּן הוּרְקְנוֹס בּוֹר סוּד שֶׁאֵינוֹ מְאַבֵּד
19 טִפָּה (רַבִּי) יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן חֲנַנְיָא אַשְׁרֵי יוֹלַדְתּוֹ (רַבִּי)

1 שׁוּמַעַת וְכָל מַעֲשֶׂיךָ בַּסֵּפֶר נִכְתָּבִים: ג רַבָּן גַּמְלִיאֵל
2 בְּנוֹ שֶׁל רַבִּי יְהוּדָה הַנָּשִׂיא אוֹמֵר יָפֶה תַלְמוּד
3 תּוֹרָה עִם דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ שֶׁיְּגִיעַת שְׁנֵיהֶם מַשְׁכַּחַת עָוֹן.
4 וְכָל תּוֹרָה שֶׁאֵין עִמָּהּ מְלָאכָה סוֹפָהּ בְּטֵלָה וְגוֹרֶרֶת
5 עָוֹן וְכָל הָעוֹסְקִים עִם הַצִּבּוּר יִהְיוּ עוֹסְקִים עִמָּהֶם
6 לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם שֶׁזְּכוּת אֲבוֹתָם מְסַיַּעְתָּם וְצִדְקָתָם
7 עוֹמֶדֶת לָעַד וַאֲתֶם מַעֲלֶה אֲנִי עֲלֵיכֶם שָׂכָר הַרְבֵּה
8 כְּאִלּוּ עֲשִׂיתֶם: ג הֱוֵי זָהִירִין בָּרָשׁוּת שֶׁאֵין מְקָרְבִין
9 לוֹ לָאָדָם אֶלָּא לְצֹרֶךְ עַצְמָן נִרְאִין כְּאוֹהֲבִין בְּשָׁעַת
10 הֲנָאָתָן וְאֵין עוֹמְדִין לוֹ לָאָדָם בְּשָׁעַת דָּחְקוֹ:
11 ד הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר עֲשֵׂה רְצוֹנוֹ כִּרְצוֹנֶךָ כְּדֵי
12 שֶׁיַּעֲשֶׂה רְצוֹנְךָ כִּרְצוֹנוֹ בַּטֵּל רְצוֹנְךָ מִפְּנֵי רְצוֹנוֹ
13 כְּדֵי שֶׁיְּבַטֵּל רְצוֹן אֲחֵרִים מִפְּנֵי רְצוֹנֶךָ: ה הִלֵּל
14 אוֹמֵר אַל תִּפְרוֹשׁ מִן הַצִּבּוּר וְאַל תַּאֲמִין בְּעַצְמְךָ
15 עַד יוֹם מוֹתְךָ וְאַל תָּדִין אֶת חֲבֵרְךָ עַד שֶׁתַּגִּיעַ
16 לִמְקוֹמוֹ וְאַל תֹּאמַר דָּבָר שֶׁאִי אֶפְשָׁר לְשָׁמְעַ
17 שֶׁסּוֹפוֹ לְהִשָּׁמַע וְאַל תֹּאמַר לִכְשֶׁאֶפָּנֶה אֶשְׁנֶה שֶׁמָּא
18 לֹא תִפָּנֶה: ו הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר אֵין בּוּר יָרֵא חֵטְא
19 וְלֹא עַם הָאָרֶץ חָסִיד וְלֹא הַבַּיְשָׁן לָמֵד וְלֹא הַקַּפְדָּן

1 אֲמָרוֹת: יוּ שִׁמְעוֹן בְּנוֹ אוֹמֵר כָּל יָמַי גָּדַלְתִּי בֵּין
2 הַחֲכָמִים וְלֹא מָצָאתִי לְגוּף טוֹב מִשְׁתִּיקָה. וְלֹא
3 הַמִּדְרָשׁ עִקָּר אֶלָּא הַמַּעֲשֶׂה. וְכָל הַמַּרְבֶּה דְּבָרִים
4 מֵבִיא חֵטְא: יח רַבָּן שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן גַּמְלִיאֵל אוֹמֵר עַל
5 שְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים הָעוֹלָם קַיָּם עַל הָאֱמֶת וְעַל הַדִּין
6 וְעַל הַשָּׁלוֹם שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר אֱמֶת וּמִשְׁפַּט שָׁלוֹם שִׁפְטוּ
7 בְּשַׁעֲרֵיכֶם:
8 רַבִּי חֲנַנְיָא בֶּן עֲקַשְׁיָא אוֹמֵר רָצָה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא לְזַכּוֹת
9 אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפִיכָךְ הִרְבָּה לָהֶם תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר יְיָ חָפֵץ
10 לְמַעַן צִדְקוֹ יַגְדִּיל תּוֹרָה וְיַאְדִּיר:

פרק שני

11 כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ לָהֶם חֵלֶק לָעוֹלָם הַבָּא. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר
12 וְעַמֵּךְ כֻּלָּם צַדִּיקִים לְעוֹלָם יִירְשׁוּ אֶרֶץ נֵצֶר
13 מַטָּעַי מַעֲשֵׂה יָדַי לְהִתְפָּאֵר:
14 א רַבִּי אוֹמֵר אֵיזוֹ הִיא דֶּרֶךְ יְשָׁרָה שֶׁיָּבוֹר לוֹ
15 הָאָדָם כָּל שֶׁהִיא תִּפְאֶרֶת לְעֹשֶׂהָ וְתִפְאֶרֶת לוֹ מִן
16 הָאָדָם. וֶהֱוֵי זָהִיר בְּמִצְוָה קַלָּה כְּבַחֲמוּרָה שֶׁאֵין
17 אַתָּה יוֹדֵעַ מַתַּן שְׂכָרָן שֶׁל מִצְוֹת. וֶהֱוֵי מְחַשֵּׁב
18 הֶפְסֵד מִצְוָה כְּנֶגֶד שְׂכָרָהּ וּשְׂכַר עֲבֵרָה כְּנֶגֶד
19 הֶפְסֵדָהּ. הִסְתַּכֵּל בִּשְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים וְאֵין אַתָּה בָּא
20 לִידֵי עֲבֵרָה. דַּע מַה לְמַעְלָה מִמְּךָ עַיִן רוֹאָה וְאֹזֶן

1 לְפָנֶיךָ יִהְיוּ בְעֵינֶיךָ כִּרְשָׁעִים וּכְשֶׁנִּפְטָרִים מִלְּפָנֶיךָ
2 יִהְיוּ בְעֵינֶיךָ כִּזְאָבִין כְּשֶׁקִּבְּלוּ עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת הַדִּין׃
3 ט שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן שָׁטַח אוֹמֵר הֱוֵי מַרְבֶּה לַחֲקוֹר אֶת
4 הָעֵדִים וֶהֱוֵי זָהִיר בִּדְבָרֶיךָ שֶׁמָּא מִתּוֹכָם יִלְמְדוּ
5 לְשַׁקֵּר׃ י שְׁמַעְיָה וְאַבְטַלְיוֹן קִבְּלוּ מֵהֶם. שְׁמַעְיָה
6 אוֹמֵר אֱהֵב אֶת הַמְּלָאכָה וּשְׂנָא אֶת הָרַבָּנוּת וְאַל
7 תִּתְוַדַּע לָרָשׁוּת.) יא אַבְטַלְיוֹן אוֹמֵר חֲכָמִים הִזָּהֲרוּ
8 בְדִבְרֵיכֶם שֶׁמָּא תָּחוּבוּ חוֹבַת גָּלוּת וְתִגְלוּ לִמְקוֹם
9 מַיִם הָרָעִים וְיִשְׁתּוּ הַתַּלְמִידִים הַבָּאִים אַחֲרֵיכֶם
10 וְיָמוּתוּ וְנִמְצָא שֵׁם שָׁמַיִם מִתְחַלֵּל׃ יב הִלֵּל וְשַׁמַּאי
11 קִבְּלוּ מֵהֶם. הִלֵּל אוֹמֵר הֱוֵי מִתַּלְמִידָיו שֶׁל אַהֲרֹן
12 אוֹהֵב שָׁלוֹם וְרוֹדֵף שָׁלוֹם אוֹהֵב אֶת הַבְּרִיּוֹת
13 וּמְקָרְבָן לַתּוֹרָה׃ יג הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר נֶגִיד שֶׁמָּא אֲבַד
14 שְׁמִי וּדְלָא מוֹסִיף יָסֵף וּדְלָא יַלִּיף קָטְלָא חַיָּב
15 וּדְאִשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בְּתָגָא חָלָף׃ יד הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר אִם אֵין
16 אֲנִי לִי מִי לִי וּכְשֶׁאֲנִי לְעַצְמִי מָה אֲנִי וְאִם לֹא
17 עַכְשָׁו אֵימָתַי׃ טו שַׁמַּאי אוֹמֵר עֲשֵׂה תוֹרָתְךָ קֶבַע
18 אֱמוֹר מְעַט וַעֲשֵׂה הַרְבֵּה וֶהֱוֵי מְקַבֵּל אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם
19 בְּסֵבֶר פָּנִים יָפוֹת׃ טז רַבָּן גַּמְלִיאֵל הָיָה אוֹמֵר עֲשֵׂה
20 לְךָ רַב וְהִסְתַּלֵּק מִן הַסָּפֵק וְאַל תַּרְבֶּה לְעַשֵּׂר׃

1 הָיָה אוֹמֵר אַל תִּהְיוּ כַּעֲבָדִים הַמְשַׁמְּשִׁין אֶת הָרַב
2 עַל מְנָת לְקַבֵּל פְּרָס אֶלָּא הֱווּ כַּעֲבָדִים הַמְשַׁמְּשִׁין
3 אֶת הָרַב שֶׁלֹּא עַל מְנָת לְקַבֵּל פְּרָס וִיהִי מוֹרָא
4 שָׁמַיִם עֲלֵיכֶם: ד יוֹסֵי בֶּן יוֹעֶזֶר אִישׁ צְרֵדָה וְיוֹסֵי
5 בֶּן יוֹחָנָן אִישׁ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם קִבְּלוּ מֵהֶם. יוֹסֵי בֶּן יוֹעֶזֶר
6 אִישׁ צְרֵדָה אוֹמֵר יְהִי בֵיתְךָ בֵּית וַעַד לַחֲכָמִים וֶהֱוֵי
7 מִתְאַבֵּק בַּעֲפַר רַגְלֵיהֶם וֶהֱוֵי שׁוֹתֶה בַצָּמָא אֶת
8 דִּבְרֵיהֶם: ה יוֹסֵי בֶּן יוֹחָנָן אִישׁ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם אוֹמֵר יְהִי
9 בֵיתְךָ פָּתוּחַ לָרְוָחָה וְיִהְיוּ עֲנִיִּים בְּנֵי בֵיתֶךָ וְאַל
10 תַּרְבֶּה שִׂיחָה עִם הָאִשָּׁה. בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ אָמְרוּ קַל וָחוֹמֶר
11 בְּאֵשֶׁת חֲבֵרוֹ. מִכָּאן אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים כָּל הַמַּרְבֶּה
12 שִׂיחָה עִם הָאִשָּׁה גּוֹרֵם רָעָה לְעַצְמוֹ וּבוֹטֵל מִדִּבְרֵי
13 תוֹרָה וְסוֹפוֹ יוֹרֵשׁ גֵּיהִנֹּם: ו יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן פְּרַחְיָה
14 וְנִתַּאי הָאַרְבֵּלִי קִבְּלוּ מֵהֶם. יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן פְּרַחְיָה
15 אוֹמֵר עֲשֵׂה לְךָ רַב וּקְנֵה לְךָ חָבֵר וֶהֱוֵי דָן אֶת כָּל
16 הָאָדָם לְכַף זְכוּת: ז נִתַּאי הָאַרְבֵּלִי אוֹמֵר הַרְחֵק
17 מִשָּׁכֵן רָע וְאַל תִּתְחַבֵּר לָרָשָׁע וְאַל תִּתְיָאֵשׁ מִן
18 הַפֻּרְעָנוּת: ח יְהוּדָה בֶּן טַבַּאי וְשִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן שָׁטַח
19 קִבְּלוּ מֵהֶם. יְהוּדָה בֶּן טַבַּאי אוֹמֵר אַל תַּעַשׂ
20 עִצְמְךָ כְּעוֹרְכֵי הַדַּיָּנִין וּכְשֶׁיִּהְיוּ בַּעֲלֵי הַדִּין עוֹמְדִים

פרקי אבות.

פרק ראשון

1 כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ לָהֶם חֵלֶק לָעוֹלָם הַבָּא. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר
2 וְעַמֵּךְ כֻּלָּם צַדִּיקִים לְעוֹלָם יִירְשׁוּ אֶרֶץ נֵצֶר
3 מַטָּעַי מַעֲשֵׂה יָדַי לְהִתְפָּאֵר׃
4 א משֶׁה קִבֵּל תּוֹרָה מִסִּינַי וּמְסָרָהּ לִיהוֹשֻׁעַ
5 וִיהוֹשֻׁעַ לִזְקֵנִים וּזְקֵנִים לִנְבִיאִים וּנְבִיאִים מְסָרוּהָ
6 לְאַנְשֵׁי כְנֶסֶת הַגְּדוֹלָה. הֵם אָמְרוּ שְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים
7 הֱווּ מְתוּנִים בַּדִּין וְהַעֲמִידוּ תַלְמִידִים הַרְבֵּה וַעֲשׂוּ
8 סְיָג לַתּוֹרָה׃ ב שִׁמְעוֹן הַצַּדִּיק הָיָה מִשְּׁאֲרֵי כְנֶסֶת
9 הַגְּדוֹלָה. הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר עַל שְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים הָעוֹלָם
10 עוֹמֵד עַל הַתּוֹרָה וְעַל הָעֲבוֹדָה וְעַל גְּמִילוּת חֲסָדִים׃
11 ג אַנְטִיגְנוֹס אִישׁ סוֹכוֹ קִבֵּל מִשִּׁמְעוֹן הַצַּדִּיק. הוּא

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